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ABSTRACT

This document presents information on Nigeria for use in the elementary classroom. A basic theme of the text is change. Nigeria is currently in a state of change, as are most developing countries. North American children often have an idea of African people as poor and backward. In this text, Nigerian people are presented as a people with a rich and exciting culture, people who are facing many problems that come with a colonial heritage and relatively new independence, and people who are resourceful and courageous in dealing with those problems. Through this text, students see that the concerns of Nigerians are often the same as their own, and that studying Nigeria, and the way that Nigerians are dealing with problems can help students look more clearly at their own society. This text is divided into eleven sections, which may be duplicated for class use. Each section is followed by activities to help students critically examine aspects of the information presented and link this material with their own lives. The sections include: land and climate, history, government, people, religion and culture, rural life, cities and towns, water and health, education, environment, and development decisions. The last two sections, on the environment and development decisions, relate Nigeria's problems to those of the rest of the world. A glossary, bibliography, and fact sheet, as well as maps, photographs and illustrations also are included. (DK)

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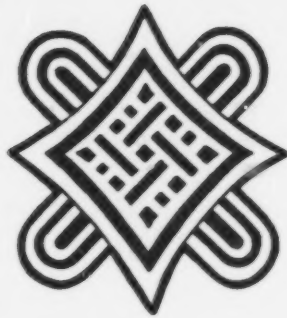
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NIGERIA



by *Susan Gage*

Illustrated by
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TEACHER OVERVIEW

It is difficult to present an accurate picture of Nigeria, because the current theme of Nigeria — as in many developing countries — is change. Life for many Nigerians is a tricky balance between traditional and westernized values. If you visit a small, northern village, you'll feel you're in a place where not much has changed for the past 500 years. An hour's drive can take you to a bustling modern city where vans and taxis shriek through the streets and students discuss last night's TV show.

So trying to answer the question — *What is it like to live in Nigeria?* — is difficult. There is more than one Nigeria. Life changes enormously with the move from country to city. Nigeria is a collection of many different groups of people, each with its own language and traditions, who were thrown together by their colonial history. This text tries to give a flavour of what life is like for both rural and urban people, what life is like for Yoruba, Ibo, Hausa and Fulani people. But it's important, when teaching about Nigeria, to stress that life in Nigeria is not static, but caught in a fast process of change. The children of illiterate farmers who find themselves studying the principles of thermodynamics are children with one foot in the old world and one in the new, and they seek to find a path for their lives — and for Nigeria — which is a blend of both.

Often, North American children have an idea of African people as "poor" and "backward" people. In this text, Nigerian people are presented as a people with a rich and exciting culture, people who are facing many problems which come with a colonial heritage and relatively new independence, people who are resourceful and courageous in dealing with those problems. Through this text, students will see that the concerns of Nigerians are often the same as their own, and that studying Nigeria and the way that Nigerians are dealing with problems can help us look more clearly at our own society.

The text is divided into eleven sections, which may be duplicated for class use. Each section is followed by activities to help students critically examine aspects of the information presented, and help them link this material with their own lives.



NIGERIA FACTS

SIZE: 924,000 sq. km — about the size of British Columbia. Nigeria is the 14th largest African country in size.

LOCATION: Nigeria is easy to find on a map because it fits right into the curve of West Africa. If you think of Africa as a kind of ice cream cone-shape, Nigeria is right where the ice cream starts, on the west side. It stretches from the Atlantic Ocean in the south, right up towards the Sahara desert. Its neighbours are all French-speaking countries: Cameroon in the East, Benin in the West, and Niger and Chad in the North.

LATITUDE: 4° to 14° North

LONGITUDE: 3° to 15° East

POPULATION: 118.8 million (estimated)

Although Nigeria is only the 14th largest country in Africa in area, it is the most populated country of Africa, with about four times as many people as Canada. One out of every 5 Africans lives in Nigeria.

CAPITAL CITY: Lagos, with a population of at least 5 million, is Africa's second largest city. Although Lagos is the capital of Nigeria for now, national departments are gradually being moved to the new planned capital, Abuja.

GOVERNMENT: Right now, Nigeria is run by a military government, and all of Nigeria's 21 states are headed by military governors. However, the military government has promised that in 1992 there will be elections for a democratic government.

HEAD OF STATE: General Ibrahim Babangida has been the president of Nigeria since August 28, 1985.

NATIONAL FLAG: Vertical bands of green, white, and another of green. Green represents the fertility of the land; white represents the peace that unity among the Nigerian people can bring.



CURRENCY: The Naira and the Kobo. 100 Kobo = 1 Naira.
1990: 7 Naira = \$1.00 Canadian

GNP PER CAPITA: \$340 Canadian; \$290 US (Canadian GNP: \$19,843 Can.)
This means the average annual income in Nigeria is \$340 Canadian.

LANGUAGES: The official language of Nigeria is English. However, over 300 languages are spoken in Nigeria. The main languages, other than English, are Hausa, Yoruba and Ibo.

RELIGIONS:

Muslim - 47% Christian - 35% Animist - 18%

ETHNIC GROUPS: There are over 250 different ethnic groups living in Nigeria, each with its own language and customs. The largest ones are these:

- Hausa and Fulani people of the north: 30 to 40%
- Yorubas in the southwest, estimated at 20%
- Ibos in the southeast, estimated at 17%.

HEALTH: Life expectancy is 51 years (Canada: 77 years). Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) is 104. This means that, out of every 1,000 babies born, 104 die before they reach their first birthday. In Canada, the IMR is 7.

LITERACY RATE: About 54% of Nigerian men, and 31% of Nigerian women, can read and write. 77% of Nigerian children get to attend primary school, but only 29% of secondary school-aged children are enrolled in school.

MAJOR CROPS: Groundnuts (what we call peanuts), cassava, millet, sorghum, rice, cotton, cocoa, yams, and palm products.

EXPORTS: Oil, columbite, cocoa, rubber, palm products, and handicrafts.

(These facts are compiled from World Bank and UNICEF figures, 1990, and other sources.)



LAND and CLIMATE

**From desert to swamp
— Nigeria has it all!**

- *What is it like to live in a country close to the equator?*
- *Why is the desert creeping south? How can it be stopped?*

Nigeria

— Land of Great Rivers, Land of Many Climates —

In North America we're used to living far north of the equator, so it's hard to imagine what it's like to live in a country which, at its southern end, is only 4° north of the equator. For one thing, it's a lot hotter. For another, there are only two seasons: a wet season and a dry season. Not only are the seasons different, but the days are different, too. We're used to having short days in the winter and long days in the summer. When you're close to the equator, the days stay the same length year-round. Each day at about 6 p.m. the sun goes down and the stars come out.

Nigeria is a land of great variation. When you fly across Nigeria from north to south, you begin by flying over kilometer after kilometer of flat, dry grassland. Every once in awhile the plain is broken by a little cluster of round huts; somehow, out of this dry land, a village is managing to scrape a living.

As you fly further south, towards the great northern city of Kano, you will begin to see a few more trees. If you are flying during the wet season (May to September in the north) you will begin to see green: a great rolling carpet of grass sheltered by spreading green trees dotted here and there. If your flight is during the dry season (October to April) you'll continue to see browns, broken by bright patches of green irrigated land.

Further south yet, you cross a broad band of dense forest, plantations and cities. This is what's left of Nigeria's tropical rainforest, where it's hot and steamy all year 'round.

Finally you're at the coast, the great Gulf of Guinea. You will see the huge, sprawling city of Lagos as you approach its international airport to land. Nearby are salty lagoons and saltwater swamps.

From desert to swamp — Nigeria has it all! Let's get off the plane now, and look a bit more closely at these different types of climate and vegetation.

The Coastal Fringe

Mangrove Swamp

The best place to see the mangrove swamps is around the Niger Delta. Look at the map of Nigeria on page 8 and trace the Niger River. It's quite a river: the third largest in Africa — 4,200 kilometers long. It begins in faraway Guinea, and flows through Mali and Niger before it heads through Nigeria towards the Atlantic Ocean. Halfway on its journey through Nigeria, it is joined by another great river, the Benue. All along the way, these two great rivers gather rich soil, which they have deposited for thousands of years to form the Niger Delta — 36,000 square km of land, spreading 320 km along the coast. When it hits the delta, the Niger river breaks up into a network of channels. Many of the channels are obstructed by sandbars. Much of the land near the ocean is saltwater swamp, and the only trees that find it easy to grow there are mangrove trees.

To see the mangrove swamps, you'll have to board a Nigerian canoe, hollowed out of a big rainforest tree. The owner of the canoe, Mr. Akinola, paddles along a



Mangrove trees stand on their prop roots in a creek in the Niger Delta.

broad, shallow inlet. "Careful, careful!" he warns, for the Niger River contains three different kinds of crocodiles. Mr. Akinola knows the channels well, for he and his son often fish here. The air around us is heavy and humid, but not as hot as it will get when we go further north. Here on the Niger Delta the temperature varies between 23°C and 29°C throughout the year.

The mangrove trees, when we draw near enough to see them closely, are amazing. They seem to be standing on their roots! These "prop roots"

are sent out by parent plants, and the roots then send up new trunks, so the trees are attached to each other. The trees we can see on the shore are large ones, about 9 meters tall, with thick oval leaves. Mr. Akinola explains that further back are the smaller types of mangrove trees.

Ooops! It's starting to rain. Good thing you brought along your rain jacket. Since this mangrove swamp area gets an annual rainfall of 220 to 330 cm a year, it's hardly surprising that it's getting a bit wet! Mr. Akinola turns the canoe, and sweeps quickly past the long, dense forest of mangroves towards shelter. Here among the mangroves, it's easy to think we're all alone with the crocodiles, but the Niger Delta holds more than mangroves. In 1956 oil was discovered, and now the Delta is the centre of Nigeria's petroleum industry. Just a little to the east of this silent swamp is Port Harcourt, the bustling city from which millions of litres of oil are shipped to countries all over the world.

Under the Canopy

— Nigeria's Tropical Rainforest —

If you were to manage to hack your way through the mangrove forests, you might find yourself — if you were lucky — in a patch of tropical rainforest. Look up, and what do you see? Branches, vines, and leaves, wherever you look. The rain forest has three layers: a top layer of giant trees growing up to 35 meters tall, below this a canopy of medium trees whose leaves close out the sun, and below — where there is little sunlight — woody shrubs and ground cover. This area gets a lot of rain — 150 to 200 cm a year, right from March to October — and the canopy of the rainforest holds so much moisture it feels like a steambath. At one time, the rainforest was home to many species: birds and monkeys in the canopy; African elephants, giant forest hogs, buffalo, duikers, and leopards on the ground. Now, with ever-growing Nigerian cities and towns, with loggers and farmers, the rainforest exists only in small forest reserves, and most of the animals have gone. Wait! If you look very closely, right up there . . . a red-bellied monkey, found only in Nigeria's rainforest, weaves through the canopy.

Until recently Nigeria exported enormous numbers of its giant rainforest trees to countries like Canada and the United States, where people wanted to use woods like mahogany for furniture. Now, so much of the rainforest has been cut down that Nigeria has become a *net importer* of wood. That means Nigeria buys more wood from other countries than it sells to them.

The one rainforest tree which usually survives the logging is the *oil palm tree*, which grows wild in the rainforest. Its oil is used for making margarine, cooking oil and soap. When the rest of the rainforest is cleared, Nigerians are careful to leave the oil palm standing, and this cleared-out rainforest land is called *oil palm bush*.

Nigerian Prairies

— The Savanna —

From the humid rainforest area of Nigeria, hop on a bus travelling north and soon you'll be in a completely different world. The trees are smaller, more thinned out, and the grass has taken over. The climate in this region is very different. There is less rain (50 to 150 cm), and the rainfall is concentrated into a shorter period: May to September. The rest of the year is dry. The air here is not like the unchanging, humid weather down at the coast. During the dry season the air is very dry, and during the nights you'll need a blanket. Plants have to be hardy here, able to grow in the intense, dry heat. We have entered the **savanna** zone. In the rainy season, the savanna is green. Some of the trees, like the acacia, hold brilliant blossoms up to the sun. Others, like the massive baobab tree, extend tender green shoots. Farmers tend the fields which they have cut from the savanna undergrowth, and small herds of goats nibble at the greenery. Six months later, the same scene will be brown and dry, as the grasses and trees wait for the rain that will bring them to life. It is here in the dry season that we have our first taste of the Harmattan, the strong wind which sweeps down from the north, filled with desert dust, stinging our eyes and filling all the landscape with a fine haze.

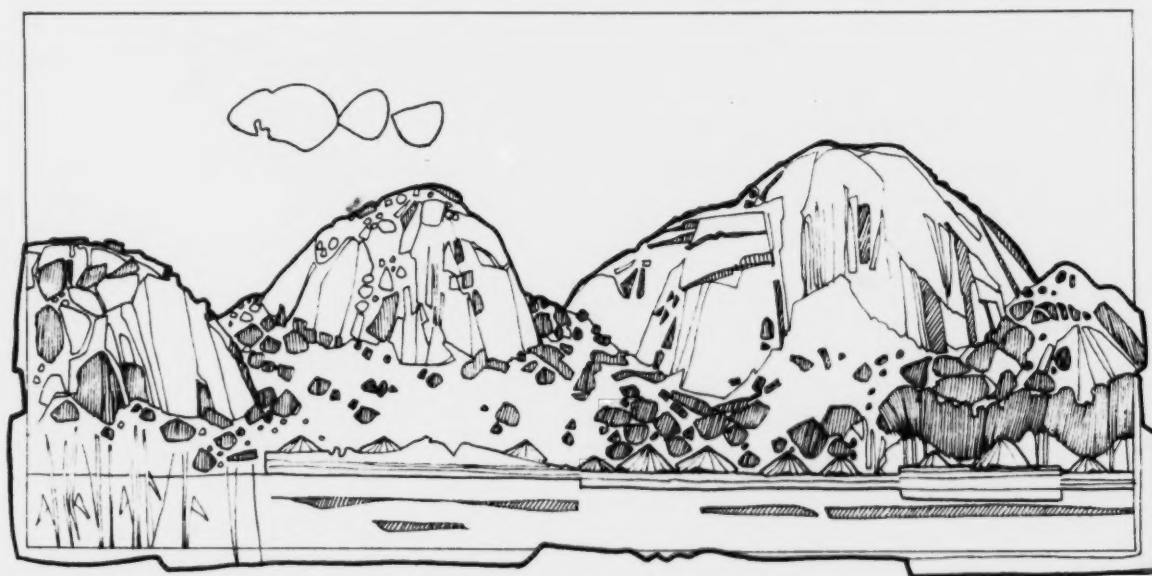
Sentinels of the Savanna

— Plateaus and Inselbergs —

Right about the middle of Nigeria, rising up from the flat savanna, is the great Jos Plateau. If you're riding in a bus, you'll suddenly find the bus climbing up, up . . . 1,000 meters . . . 1,200 meters . . . up some more . . . and suddenly you're on the top of the escarpment, looking down at the savanna beneath you. Because the plateau is so high, the weather is cool, and the city of Jos is a popular one for visitors. The Jos Plateau is very rich in tin, which has been mined here since before the time of Christ. Along with the tin is columbite, a rare mineral which helps to make steel extra hard, and is used in atomic reactors and jet engines.

The other major plateau is the Biu Plateau, in north eastern Nigeria, which is 700 meters in height, and famous for its collection of extinct volcanoes. This plateau is not as populated as the Jos Plateau, because its soil is poor and water is scarce.

If you were to stroll along a Nigerian road, cutting through the flat savanna, you might be surprised to see, rising out of the flat plain, a huge mound of smooth granite. These rock formations, scattered throughout the Nigerian savanna, are called **inselbergs**. Their name means, in German, "island-mountains," and they are found in other parts of Africa too. They were formed more than 500 million years ago. Because of their strength and structure they didn't erode away, but simply became smooth and rounded, standing up like sentinels of the Nigerian savanna.



Formed more than 500 million years ago, these massive mounds of granite stand like sentinels in the Nigerian savanna.

Desert Creeping Southward

—The Sahel—

If you keep heading north past the city of Kano, right up to the northern fringe of Nigeria and the area around Lake Chad, you'll finally reach the sahel zone. Sahel is an Arabic word which means "desert's edge," and is often used to refer to all the countries along the under-edge of the Sahara desert. When we say "sahel zone," we mean an area which is semi-desert. This area receives only 500 mm per year of rain, and has few trees. It's difficult to grow anything here, but millet — the staple food in this region — can be grown with only 200 to 250 mm of rainfall in the light, sandy soil.

For many years the people who live here, and experts who have visited the region, have argued and worried about whether or not the desert is spreading, and whether the climate is becoming dryer and dryer. This is what a British forester, E.P. Stebbing, wrote about West Africa in 1935:

"And the desert is advancing! How, or how fast, I have yet to learn . . . The people are living on the edge, not of a volcano, but of a desert whose power is incalculable and whose silent and almost inevitable approach must be difficult to estimate. But the end is obvious: total annihilation of vegetation and disappearance of man and beast."

But is the desert advancing by itself? Or is it advancing because of what people are doing to the land?

In Nigeria, as in many African countries, the main source of fuel is wood. At one time wood was easy to find nearby. Now, Nigerian women and children must often walk for hours to find the wood they need to cook their food. Slowly, the fragile land of the north is losing all its trees. When this happens, the strong Harmattan winds from the north can easily pick up the soil and blow it away. When the rains come — and they often come all at once, in great storms — the soil is easily washed away without the roots of the trees to hold it in.

As the soil erodes, it doesn't produce as many crops, and the farmers must plant more fields in order to feed their families. This leads to more ploughing up of ground cover, more chopping of trees, and ... guess what? ... more erosion. The Fulani herders, whom we'll meet later, find they have less and less land for their cattle, since the farmers are using more land to plant crops. As the cattle are forced onto smaller amounts of land, they nibble the grass and shrubs right down to the roots, and this land begins to erode, too. When all this erosion gets so serious that the land becomes useless for growing things, we call the process **desertification**. It seems that desertification isn't caused just by nature, but also by people. A forestry official from Niger, Nigeria's northern neighbour, said this: "The Sahara is not *moving* south; we are *pulling* it south."

Along with the worry about desertification is another worry. The climate of the Sahel area appears to be changing. For 16 of the past 17 years, rainfall in this area has been below normal. Some experts blame this on unknown natural causes. Others point out that this climate change may in fact be caused by desertification.



Women on their way to market. What are they carrying on their heads? One of the main things is wood, which is still used all over Nigeria for fuel.

There are a number of theories linking desertification and climate change:

- **the dust theory:** when the air is full of dust, it can't absorb the water particles as well, and this leads to less rain;
- **the albedo theory:** when the ground cover is removed, there is more reflection from the bare ground, and this makes the air less likely to pick up and transport water particles;
- **the moisture theory:** since the air gets water from evaporation, the fact that there is less vegetation and less moisture in the soil means that less evaporation will occur, and there will be less rain.

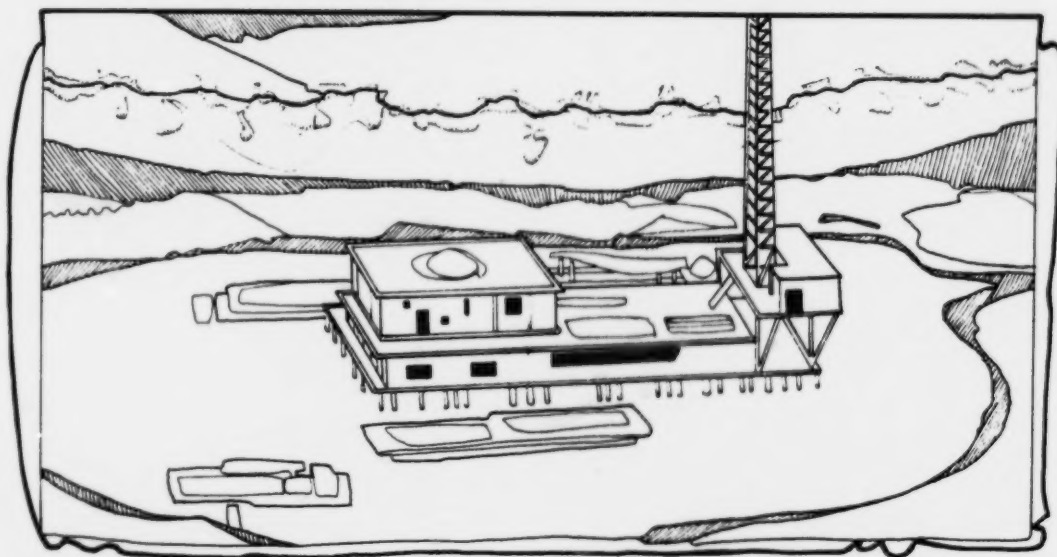
Whatever the cause, the continuing lack of rain and increasing desertification are causing hardship and suffering for the people of northern Nigeria.

What's the answer? One of the easiest answers to desertification is reforestation. When farmers are helped to understand the importance of trees, and when seedlings are easy for them to get, they will plant trees and work very hard to help restore their land.

Resources

Nigeria's Black Gold

Hidden under all that land you saw from the plane are Nigeria's mineral resources. Nigeria is the world's ninth largest oil producer. Nigeria can produce over two million barrels of oil a day! At current consumption levels, Nigeria has 35 years of oil and 100 years of natural gas. In the Jos Plateau, there is tin as well as columbite.



An oil rig on the coast of Southeastern Nigeria



— Activities —

POINTS OF VIEW



"If you are thinking a year ahead, sow seed. If you are thinking ten years ahead, plant a tree. If you are thinking one hundred years ahead, educate the people. By sowing seed, you will harvest once. By planting a tree, you will harvest tenfold. By educating the people, you will harvest one hundredfold."

— Chinese Poet, 2000 years ago

• New Directions for Bodiga

The people of Bodiga, a fictional village in northern Nigeria, are getting desperate. There hasn't been much rain for several years, and the crops are poor. Much of the good soil is blowing away because the trees have been cleared; the land is looking more and more like desert. Farmers are having to plant more land in crops each year, just to get enough food to survive. The Fulani herders are upset because some of the land where their cattle used to graze is now planted in crops. Women are having to go farther and farther to find firewood to cook the food. Divide your class into groups of five, and each person in the group take one of these roles:

★ **Nigerian Forestry Official:** You are trying to encourage the people to plant rows of seedlings in order to stop the desert from spreading.

★ **Fulani Herder** (see pages 45 to 47 for more information about the Fulani herders): It is getting harder and harder to find land for your herd to graze, because the people of this area are using more land for crops. Now, because your cattle have to manage with less land, they nibble more of the grass and small, tender seedlings, and they trample the ground more with their hooves. You know this is causing the desert to spread, but what can you do about it?

★ **Man from Bodiga:** You would like to plant trees, but your time is taken up just trying to cultivate crops. Besides, where would you get the seedlings from? Also, often seedlings die when the village goats or the Fulani cattle nibble on them, so the whole thing is a waste of time.

★ **Woman from Bodiga:** Your day is so busy! You have to work in the fields, fetch water from a long distance, and now you have to go farther and farther to get wood. Often it takes you and your children a whole day to get enough wood for a week. You would like to plant seedlings, but there is so little time. You would like to stop cutting down the trees, but where else will you find fuel to cook the food?

continued on the next page

★ **Representative of a North American Aid Organization:** You would like to help the people of Bodiga stop desertification. You have a limited amount of money you can spend. Some of the things you are considering are these:

- paying for a seedling nursery
- helping farmers develop more efficient farm methods
- providing fencing materials to protect young seedlings
- preparing an educational package to help the people understand the importance of planting trees
- introducing more efficient stoves so that less fuel will be used
- planting special fodder — food for cattle — so the cattle won't eat the seedlings.

The people of Bodiga, along with the aid representative, must choose 3 of these projects to do.

In your small groups, divide your time this way:

- Give each person up to 3 minutes to present his or her point of view.
- Discuss the problem for 10 minutes, remembering to keep the point of view of the person you are pretending to be.
- Spend 10 minutes deciding on the top three choices, and be prepared to report to the rest of the class on why you chose them. Write your top three choices on a large sheet of paper, so the rest of the class can read them.
- Choose one person from your group to report to the rest of the class.

LET'S DISCUSS



• Rainforests: Cutting Down on Cutting Down

The rainforests of Nigeria are being cut to send wood to rich countries like Canada, the U.S., and European countries. People in these countries like the tropical hardwoods — woods like mahogany — which come from the rainforest.

But there are lots of problems for the whole world which might result from the cutting down of rainforest.

★ Rainforests are the lungs of the world; they help to absorb the carbon dioxide put into the air by cars and factories. If we cut all the rainforests down, we may not have a supply of pure, fresh air to breathe. Scientists think that huge tropical rainforests help to control the world's climate, by "recycling" moisture. In other words, cut down all the rainforests, and we may be in for a big dose of global warming.

Different people think we should do different things to slow the cutting. Here are some ideas:

- ★ People in countries like Canada and the U.S. should stop buying tropical hardwood furniture.
- ★ The government of Nigeria is in debt and it has to keep selling its logs to make money. If the rich countries want the poor countries to keep their rainforests, they had better send some money to the poor countries.
- ★ Instead of selling raw logs, Nigerians should build sawmills and furniture factories. Then they could make the same amount of money by just cutting down a few trees, and making them into boards and furniture.
- ★ Countries like Canada and the U.S. should tell Nigeria they won't trade with Nigeria unless Nigeria stops cutting down its rainforest.
- ★ Canada and the U.S. are cutting down their own forests. We should slow down on our own cutting, to set an example.

Think about all of these ideas. You can probably come up with some more. Discuss this question:

How can the world preserve its rainforests?

Some people in the class might like to take notes on the discussion (a tape recorder or video recorder would help), and to write up the main ideas in an article for the school or community newspaper.

(For another rainforest activity, see Environment, page 109.)

HANDS ON



• **Map It!**

Make a map of Nigeria, showing the major climatic regions and the major cities. Mark the Jos and Biu Plateaus by shading those areas to show that they are higher than the rest. One way that you can make your map more interesting is to find or draw a picture of each different region — coastal fringe, tropical rainforest, savanna, and sahel. Glue the map to the middle of a

large piece of cardboard and the pictures around the edge. Using pieces of wool or string, attach each picture to the area of Nigeria where it belongs.

MEDIA REPORT

- **Let's Travel to Nigeria!**

You run a travel company which is organizing bus tours through Nigeria. You want to encourage as many tourists as possible to come on your bus tour. Prepare a travel brochure, which will describe the different sights and regions which your tour would go through, travelling from north to south. You might want to include some pictures which you make to show the vegetation of different regions.

LET'S FIND OUT

- **Desertification: What Can We do About It?**

Desertification is a terrible problem in many African countries, not just in Nigeria. Many North American non-governmental organizations are working to try to improve the situation, by helping farmers plant trees and farm in ways that save the soil. You can find out about these organizations (OXFAM, the Red Cross, CUSO, Save the Children Fund, UNICEF, and the Unitarian Service Committee, to name some) by asking the librarian of your school or community library to help you. Perhaps your class could break into groups and write to some of these organizations to find out these things:

- ★ What African countries does the organization work in?
- ★ Is desertification a problem in these countries?
- ★ How is the organization trying to stop desertification?
- ★ What material can they send you about desertification?



HISTORY

Early ironworkers and artists, powerful trading kingdoms in the north and fabulous cities in the south: Nigeria's early history was one of art, war and progress. Then the Europeans took over.

- *What can we learn about Nigeria's early history through digging in the ground?*
- *What was colonialism, and how did it affect Nigeria?*
- *What problems did Nigeria have once it became independent?*

Piecing The Past Together ***— Nigeria's Early History —***

Often we think of history as things that are written down — old manuscripts and scrolls that tell us about life in the past. In North America much of the history of the first people, the native Canadians and native Americans, is an oral history. Stories were told around the fire, and passed down from one generation of people to the next. We also learn about early history by digging up artifacts — tools and household objects from the past. By examining these artifacts and testing them scientifically to see how old they are, anthropologists can get an idea about how the people lived in long ago times.

It's the same in Nigeria. Early people living in what is now Nigeria did not have a written language, so we must learn about them through examining the clues which are found buried in the ground, and through listening to the stories told by Nigerian elders about events which happened long ago.

Nok (500 BC — 200 AD)**— Early Ironworkers and Sculptors —**

"Kai! See what I've found!" An excited tin miner gathers his friends around, and shows them what he holds in his hand — a perfectly formed human head, made from the local red clay. Somehow, it looks very, very old. The miner has found one of the glories of Nigeria — the first of the Nok figurines. The year is 1943; the terracotta (clay) head which the miner holds in his hand is about 2,500 years old. The area where the tin miner is digging is near the city of Jos, on the high Jos Plateau, right near the middle of Nigeria.

Archaeologists, piecing together not only the pieces of clay, but the bits of information which they learn from the figurines, tell us that the Nok culture flourished from 500 BC to 200 AD, and perhaps longer. The Nok people were excellent ironworkers, using iron tools to improve their farming. They travelled



A Nok terracotta head

far and wide, and their art influenced many other people over a broad area. Unfortunately, all we know about the Nok people is what we can learn from their clay figures; they left no written records.

**Kanem-Bornu (800 — 1750 AD)****— On the Desert's Edge —**

Around 800 AD, some desert tribes pushed south to the borders of modern Nigeria where they settled amongst the people who already lived there, taking control of their lands. By 1100 AD, they had established the wealthy empire of Kanem, around Lake Chad. Kanem was in the perfect place at the perfect time.

Trade across the Sahara desert, between the Arabs and the Africans, was becoming very important. Salt, copper, horses and metalwork came south, and kola nuts, ivory and wood products went north. Kanem grew wealthy by taxing every camel that came through its borders. It became a centre of trade, with inns for the caravans of traders. After the 14th century, the princes of Kanem began to war amongst themselves, and they were soon taken over by the kingdom of Bornu. Bornu became a centre of Muslim culture, attracting teachers, writers, and religious leaders.

The most famous of Bornu's emperors was Mai Idris (16th century) who built up a powerful army equipped with the latest Egyptian weapons. He conquered surrounding tribes, not only seizing their land, but converting them to Islam. Idris brought Muslim law to the land and constructed a famous mosque in Bornu. When he finally died in 1617, he passed on to his cousin Muhammed V a strong, peaceful kingdom which lasted until the mid-18th century.

The Hausa City-States (1000 — 1900 AD)

— Traders Supreme —

Soon after 1000 AD, the Hausa people of northern Nigeria began to organize themselves into strong fortress-states. Two of the major states were Kano and Katsina. Like Kanem-Bornu, the Hausa states were on the trading routes across the Sahara. They started to produce cloth, leather goods, pottery, metalwork, beads,

Traders carried Hausa cloth, leather goods, pottery, metalwork, beads, woodwork and glass across the Sahara desert to Arabia

woodwork and glass. Traders carried these across the Sahara desert to Arabia, and also to other parts of Africa. These states were forts; the people built deep ditches and high walls of baked mud to protect themselves against attack by people from other city-states.

Early in the 19th century a Fulani preacher, Usman dan Fodio, got fed up with the Hausa kings. They were Muslim, but (according to Usman dan Fodio) they were no longer very good Muslims. They had become slack. Usman led a *jihad*, or holy war, against them. With his following of faithful Fulani Muslims, Usman dan Fodio defeated the Hausa kings, and took over almost all of what is now northern Nigeria. Since then, the **emirs** (rulers) of the northern cities have all been Fulani.

(Read more about the Hausa and Fulani people on pages 42 to 47.)

Ile-Ife, Benin and Oyo (1000 — 1900 AD)

— The Magnificent Kingdoms of the South —

In the forest zones of the south, it was harder to communicate than in the savanna, and people stayed close to their villages and towns. However, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, powerful kingdoms arose in Ile-Ife (Ee-lay-ee-fay), Benin and Oyo.

Benin

— Igodomigodo: Town of Towns —

A thousand years ago, the Kingdom of Benin was known as Igodomigodo (Town of Towns). Ruled by a series of **obas** (rulers) with a taste for art and power, Benin really did become a town of towns. In the 14th century the oba hired bronze casters to create works of art for him. The bronze casters lived together, and made beautiful heads of important people, plaques to decorate the outside walls of the

oba's houses, and figures of animals — especially leopards. The bronze casters were forbidden under pain of death to make bronze castings for anyone except the oba.

The city itself was a masterpiece of early town planning. Here's what a visitor from Holland wrote in the 16th century:

"The town seems to be very great. When you enter into it, you go into a great broad street, not paved, which seems to be seven or eight times broader than the War-moes street in Amsterdam..."

The king's palace is a



A Benin bronze, made with the lost wax method

collection of buildings which occupy as much space as the town of Harlem, and which is enclosed with walls. There are numerous apartments for the Prince's ministers and fine galleries, most of which are as big as those on the Exchange at Amsterdam. They are supported by wooden pillars encased with copper, where their victories are depicted, and which are carefully kept very clean.

The town is composed of thirty main streets, very straight and 120 feet wide, apart from an infinity of small intersecting streets. The houses are close to one another, arranged in good order."

What happened to Benin — that proud town of towns? It maintained its strength until the mid-17th century, but was ruined by the slave-trade, which is something you'll hear more about later. The merchants and rulers of Benin received guns from the Europeans in return for slaves. More and more of the army's time was spent scouring the surrounding countryside for slaves. People fled from the region, leaving large areas of land deserted. In many places the farmland went back to jungle. The city began to crumble. By this time, there were few people to grow pepper or other crops, so the area was in ruins. In 1897, nine Europeans travelling to Benin were killed. To revenge their deaths, the British invaded and burned most of Benin to the ground. Thousands of the wonderful Benin bronzes were packed up and sent back on ships to Britain. The best place to see Benin bronzes today is not in Benin, but in the British Museum, or other European museums.

The Lost Wax Method

The bronze casters of Benin and Ife made their beautiful figures by the "lost wax" method. The artist made a wax model of the figure. When the wax sculpture was finished, the artist covered it with many layers of clay. After the clay dried, the whole thing was heated until the wax melted and ran out. What was left was a hardened mud mold. Pour the hot liquid bronze into the mold, break off the clay when the bronze has hardened, and what do you get? A beautiful, lifelike figure!

Archaeologists now believe that the bronze casters of Benin and of other areas of Yorubaland and Iboland were influenced by the Nok craftspeople with their lifelike terracotta figures.



The bronze head of a queen mother, made in the 16th century

Ile-Ife and Oyo

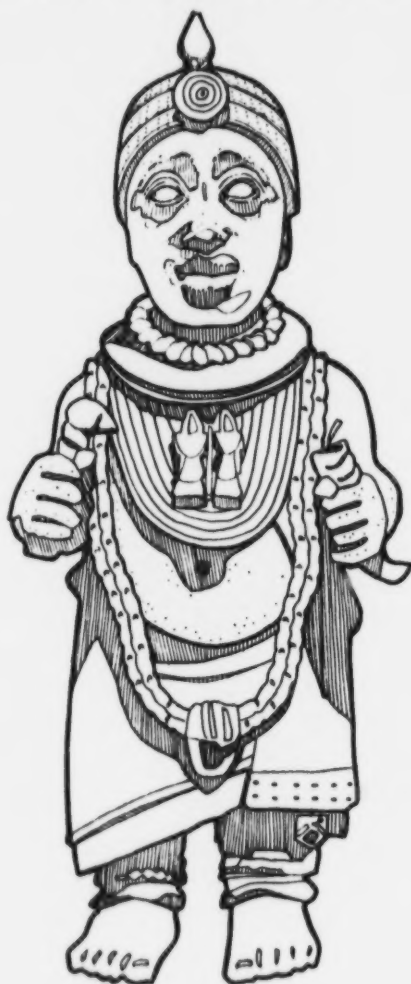
— Powerful Kingdoms with Powerful Leaders —

Ile-Ife and Oyo were also very rich and powerful cities at one time. Ile-Ife is considered by the Yoruba to be the birthplace of humankind. In the 12th and 13th centuries, the artisans of Ile-Ife made beautiful terracotta figures, as well as bronze "lost wax" figures.

The **alafins** (rulers) of Oyo began in the 16th century to build a strong army and to conquer the people nearby. By the 18th century, the Alafin of Oyo ruled over a territory stretching west to present-day Ghana. Today, the Alafin of Oyo is still an important leader of the Yoruba people. The old city of Oyo was almost completely destroyed soon after 1800 by invading Fulani and Hausa people, and when you look for Oyo on the map, what you see is really a new city of Oyo, built in a slightly different place.

Ile-Ife is the home of the **Ooni of Ile-Ife**, who is the spiritual leader of the Yoruba people—a little like the Archbishop of Canterbury in England. The present Ooni, Oba Okunade Sijuwade Olubuse II, rides in a cream-coloured Mercedes limousine, and is a millionaire businessman.

Although, as we will see later, Nigeria is now a modern country with state governors and elected town councils, the people of Yorubaland still respect their traditional leaders, the Alafin of Oyo and the Ooni of Ile-Ife.



A bronze figure from Ile-Ife

The Ibo

— Village Dwellers, Artisans —

The Ibo people (Ee-bo, sometimes spelled Igbo) never formed themselves into large cities. They lived in smaller towns and villages, raising their crops of yams, cassava and taro. But the Ibo people, just as the Yoruba, had master artisans who worked in bronze and terracotta. Bronze castings dating back to the 9th century have been found in Iboland.

The Visitors Who Forgot to Go Home Europeans come to Nigeria

— The Slave Trade (1472 — 1833) —

The first European visitors to Nigeria were traders. Portuguese explorers landed on the coast of Nigeria in 1472. They were followed during the next 100 years by the Dutch, English and French. West Africa had many things of value to traders: pepper, ivory, and tropical hardwood. As well as these products, a few African slaves found their way across the sea to Europe.

But in 1492, something happened on the other side of the world which changed West African trade completely. Christopher Columbus landed in the West Indies and claimed the territory for Spain. The Spaniards killed off many of the native Carib and Arawak Indians, and planted the rich West Indian soil with sugarcane, cotton, and coffee — products which would be sure to get a good price in Europe. The only problem was this: who was going to do all the work of growing that sugar, cotton and coffee? Certainly not the Spaniards; there weren't very many of them in the West Indies, and they didn't want to do all the work. They forced the Indians to work for them, but the Indians were so badly treated that many of them died. (In fact, by 1650, 95% of them had died.) Finally, the Spaniards came up with an answer: Africans could be brought over to grow the crops. The African slave trade began in earnest.

The African slave trade lasted for almost 400 years. During that time, 12 million slaves arrived to work in North and South America and the Caribbean. But for every slave who arrived, it is estimated another three died on the way, either on the long march down to the coast, where people were chained together, or on the terrible journey across the Atlantic, packed together under the deck. So it seems about 48 million people were actually captured. Because West Africa was closer to the



Life on a slave ship: for every slave who arrived in America, another 3 died on the way.

Americas than East Africa, most of the slaves were from West and Central Africa.

The Portuguese, and later the Dutch and British, didn't do the capturing themselves. They traded guns to some of the coastal people, like the Ibos. If a group of villagers used the guns to go out and capture slaves, they could trade the slaves for more guns and ammunition. If they refused to capture slaves, then they wouldn't get any more ammunition, and other people would capture *them*. The Europeans wouldn't trade guns for pepper, palm oil, or any other products — just slaves. This situation — a no-win situation for the Africans — was sometimes called the **slave-gun cycle**.

The slave trade had a terrible effect on the people of Nigeria. Farms were neglected, as strong young people were dragged away from their villages. Trading was disrupted, because the trade routes were no longer safe, and traders didn't want to take the risk of being captured. Different ethnic groups began to hate and distrust each other, because each group was out to capture slaves from the others. Up until the beginning of the slave trade, Africa's history was one of gradual development. People increased their skills in farming, mining, ironwork, and crafts of all sorts, and they increased their trade with each other. With the slave trade, all of this development began to go into reverse.

In 1833, the British finally ended the slave trade, and Nigerians slowly began to rebuild their country.



Mungo Park: Niger Explorer

In 1795, a young Scottish doctor, Mungo Park, set out from what is now the Gambia, accompanied by two African guides, Amadi and Mandingo Isaaco. Their purpose: to explore the unknown Niger River. After many adventures, Park and his guides found the Niger, and followed it until they ran out of supplies.

In 1805, Mungo Park set out on a second expedition, this time with 40 Europeans, to trace the Niger to its mouth. One after another, the Europeans died, mainly of malaria, and the small group of nine survivors was drowned in northwestern Nigeria, 1,800 km from the Niger's mouth.

There were years of unsuccessful attempts to trace the Niger. Then in 1830, Richard and John Lander, two brothers, trekked overland to Yauri — quite close to the place where Mungo Park and the rest of his expedition had died — and sailed down the Niger to its mouth.

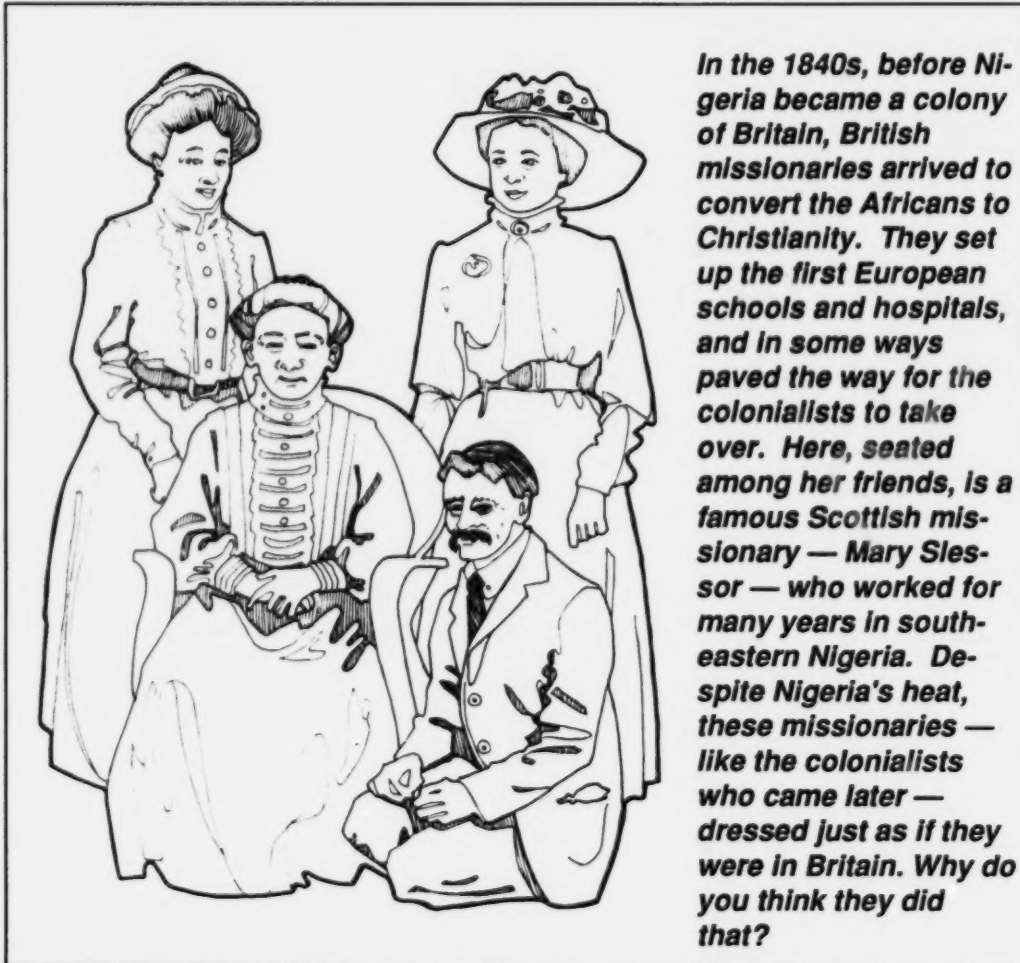
Colonialism (1900 — 1960)

— The British Take Over —

While the slave trade was going on, and Mungo Park and others were sailing down the Niger River, the Europeans had been busy in other parts of the world claiming pieces of territory for themselves. The Carib and Arawak Indians, for instance, were surprised to find Columbus had "discovered" their land and it now belonged to Spain. The name for this kind of take-over is colonialism. Under colonialism, one country becomes a colony of another, and has to obey the rules of the "mother country," pay taxes to representatives of the "mother country," and produce raw materials like minerals and crops for the "mother country."

The Europeans weren't very keen on taking over Africa, because of its thick jungles and its diseases. A little poem of the time went like this:

*"Beware, beware the Bight of Benin,
Where one comes out, forty go in."*



But, near the end of the 19th century, two things happened:

- European countries were at a stage in their industrial growth where they needed lots of **raw materials** — palm oil, cocoa, cotton — to keep their machines going, and the profits going up. They also needed more markets — people to buy their manufactured goods, such as cloth.
- Quinine, a medicine which is used to prevent malaria, was discovered.

European countries sent explorers into Africa to stake a claim; the race for African territory was on!

In Nigeria, Sir George Dashwood Taubman Goldie, a British trader, was determined to make West Africa into a British colony. He persuaded all of the small British trading companies around the Niger River to join together into one big company, the United African Company. This company, much like the Hudson Bay Company in Canada, was given the right to organize and govern the land around the Niger and Benue rivers. Sir George hired agents to go into the interior and make treaties with the African chiefs. People in Africa had never owned land in the same way that Europeans had, so the African chiefs often didn't realize when they signed the papers that their land was about to be taken. Some chiefs didn't want to sign the treaties. They were "persuaded" by Sir George's 20 gunboats, which roamed up and down the Niger and Benue rivers.

When Sir George and his company had managed to take over much of the area, the British government took direct control of the company's possessions on January 1, 1900, and reorganized them into Northern and Southern Nigeria.

— **Resistance** —

The Europeans had been clever in their trade with the Africans. They had traded them guns, but not the latest models. The newly developed guns were the Maxim and Gatling guns, which could fire several shots in a row. Because the British had this superior fire-power, they were able to overpower the Africans. But there was resistance. The city of Kano wasn't taken over until 1903, after fierce fighting. Other people fought bitterly, and were killed in great numbers.

— **Colonial Rule** —

From 1900 to 1960, the affairs of Nigeria were run by the British. In 1912, the two areas of Northern and Southern Nigeria were united into a single country. Lord Lugard, the first colonial administrator of Northern Nigeria, became the administrator of the new country of Nigeria. Lugard believed in a system of "indirect rule." He supported the traditional chiefs, and got them to carry out the laws and collect the taxes for the British. This worked fairly well in the north, but not so well in the southern region among the Ibo people. The Ibos didn't have the same system of

chiefs, so Lugard appointed chiefs, who were often not accepted by the people. The system had a great advantage for the British; it allowed them to rule Nigeria with very few British administrators. In 1938, all of Nigeria was governed by only 380 British officials.

Nigeria was a colony until 1960, and there are still many people alive who lived under the colonial system. If you were to talk to a British official, you would probably hear comments like these:

- "Think of all the schools and hospitals we gave them."
- "Those people weren't civilized. They needed the British to help them become modern."

If you talked to a Nigerian about colonialism, you'd get a different picture.

Colonialism caused a lot of problems:



Lord Lugard: the first colonial administrator of Nigeria, and mastermind of the system of "indirect rule"

• Nigeria is a country created of many very different peoples. Putting them all together into a single country is a bit like trying to put together several different European countries. Yet in 1900 the various peoples within Nigeria's boundaries had to accustom themselves to being Nigerians rather than Hausa, Fulani, Ibo, Kalabari, Tiv, Kanuri, or Yoruba.

• By taxing the farmers, the British got them to grow **export crops** like palm oil, cocoa and cotton, to be sent straight to Britain. So much of the land and the farmers' time was used to produce export crops that there wasn't enough food grown for the Nigerians to eat. In 1947 a British report showed that, for the first time, many Nigerians were suffering from malnutrition.

• Remember those tin workers in the Jos Plateau? The British came in and took over all the tin mines, hiring Nigerians to work at very low wages, and sending all of the tin to Britain. The British got a lot of cheap tin for their industries, and the Nigerians got left with the holes.

— The Struggle for Independence (1920 — 1960) —

It didn't take the Nigerians long to start organizing for independence from Britain. In 1920, Africans from all over West Africa organized the West African Congress. They demanded that Africans have more say in the running of their countries.

During World War II, Nigeria sent fifteen battalions of men, who fought for the British in Ethiopia, Burma and the Middle East. At the end of the war, Nigerians, along with other Africans who had fought, began to complain loudly. Why was it they were good enough to fight and die for Britain, but they weren't good enough to run their own country? In 1951, the British decided to allow some participation by establishing three regional legislatures — Eastern, Western, and Northern — on which there were Nigerian representatives, and a central council which discussed common problems. But many Nigerians kept demanding more. They wanted complete independence for their country. Finally, the British began to cave in. In the 1950s, a series of conferences in Lagos and in London began to examine just what kind of government an independent Nigeria would have.

During the 1950s political parties began to appear. Each region had a party which most of the people in that region supported. In the Eastern region, where the Ibo people lived, the National Council for Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) was popular. The Yorubas of the



ZIK

Nnamdi Azikwe — an Ibo journalist who owned a whole chain of Nigerian newspapers — was one of the early fathers of Nigerian independence. The colonial government at one time shut down his newspapers because he criticized the colonialists. But Zik — as he called himself — managed to start a new political party, the NCNC. When Nigeria became independent, Zik became the first Governor General. Later, when Nigerians decided to change their government to a republic with a president as well as a prime minister, Azikwe became Nigeria's first president.

Western region supported the Action Group (AG), and the Hausas and Fulanis of the Northern region supported the Northern People's Congress (NPC). All of these parties wanted more power for their region. The new government would not have an easy time trying to keep all the regions happy!

When Nigeria became independent, on October 1, 1960, it wasn't alone. During Africa's "Birthday Decade" — 1957 to 1967 — 32 African countries became independent.

Under Independence

— Regionalism: A Smoldering Problem Explodes —

At independence, Nigeria found itself left with a lot of problems. Its main problem was **regionalism**. People thought of themselves as being Northerners, or Easterners, or Westerners, rather than Nigerians. Each of the three regions struggled for power. In 1966, some Ibo military officers staged a **coup**. They assassinated Prime Minister Balewa and other northern and western leaders, and most of the senior army officers. An Ibo general took over. The northerners then staged their own coup, and massacred 10,000 to 30,000 Ibos who were living in the north. In 1967, the Ibo people declared an independent republic: Biafra. Nigeria

... national unity is never easy.

fought to keep the Ibo territory. The civil war went on for two and a half years, and 1 million people were killed. In the end, the Ibo people lost. Their area is still part of Nigeria. Since 1970, when the war ended, Nigerians have tried very hard to build a feeling of national unity, but because of differences in customs, languages, and religions, national unity is never easy.

OIL!

— The Overnight Boom —

Between 1965 and 1973, Nigeria's oil production increased by seven times, making Nigeria the world's ninth largest oil producer. World oil prices went up, up, up. Overnight, people became millionaires. By 1975, Nigeria had a US\$5 billion surplus — extra money to spend. The military government built schools, universities, TV stations, roads, industries — you name it! Then, in 1981, the price of oil went down, down, down. The money Nigeria got for its oil fell from US\$25 billion in 1980 to US\$5 billion in 1986. Nigeria had borrowed money for some of the projects, thinking that the oil money would be there to pay the debt. Now, there was a large debt, and no money to pay it back.

Nigeria Today***— Tough Times for Nigerians —***

Things in Nigeria are tough. In Canada, we expect our incomes to go up a little bit each year, but in Nigeria, average incomes went from \$1,000 a year in the late 1970s to \$340 a year in 1990. During the oil boom, the government didn't pay enough attention to helping the farmers growing food. Now there isn't enough food for everyone. Because there isn't enough money to buy parts, some of Nigeria's factories have had to shut down. Nigeria was proud to have six vehicle assembly plants; in 1986, all six stopped or slowed down production because of lack of parts. Much of the small amount of money Nigeria does make has to go to pay the interest on the debt.

To pay back the debt, Nigeria is trying to sell more things to other countries. It exports crops like cocoa, mango juice, cashew nuts, and palm products to many parts of the world. But there is a problem with some exports. When you use the land to grow crops like cocoa, Nigerians can't use that land to grow food for themselves. The population of Nigeria is growing fast, but the land area stays the same. Some people worry that growing lots of crops for export will mean that some Nigerians won't have enough to eat.

Looking Forward***— Down, But Not Out —***

This all sounds pretty depressing, but Nigerians are a determined group of people, and they haven't given up. All over Nigeria, people are working hard to improve their lives and the lives of their children. They are sure the people who in the past could dig out raw ore and transform it into beautiful works of art, who could develop finely-tuned systems of farming and government, will once again find a way to provide a good life for all.

— Activities —

POINTS OF VIEW



• Slave and Slaver: How Did it Feel?

Here is what Olaudah Equiano, an African slave, wrote about his experience on the ship travelling to the West Indies:

"I became so sick and low that I was not able to eat anything . . . I now wished for the last friend, death, to relieve me . . . but soon, to my grief some of the white men offered me eatables; and on my refusing to eat, one of them held me fast by the hands, and laid me

across the windlass, and tied my feet while the other flogged me severely. I have never experienced anything of the kind before.

At last we came in sight of the island of Barbados . . . and we soon anchored . . . off Bridgetown. Many merchants and planters now came on board . . . and examined us attentively. They also made us jump, and pointed to the land, signifying we were to go there. We thought by this we should be eaten by those ugly men, as they appeared to us; and there was much dread and trembling among us and nothing but bitter cries to be heard all night from these apprehensions. . . .

At last the white people got some old slaves from the land to pacify us. They told us we were not to be eaten, but to work . . ." (quoted in *Global Rift*, by L.S. Stavrianos)

Take another point of view on this story. You are a 14-year-old cook's helper on this slave ship. All your life you have wanted to be a sailor, and this is your first job. All the rest of the crew is used to being on a slave ship, and they think of the slaves as "animals" or "savages." But you aren't used to this, and there are a lot of things that bother you very much. Write a letter home to your family, describing some of the things that have happened, starting with picking up the slaves off the coast of Nigeria, and the journey across the Atlantic to Barbados.

• Colonialism: A Dialogue

Colonialism — a turning point in Nigerian history. Read pages 21 to 24, about colonialism and the struggle for independence.

Now, imagine this scene: It's 1950, and many Nigerians are fed up with being someone else's colony. They feel colonialism has been generally harmful for their country. The colonialists, on the other hand, feel they have brought many important elements of European civilization to Nigeria.

Two people are talking about this. They are *Constance Obafemi*, a young, educated Yoruba woman, and *Peter Hughes*, a colonial administrator. Write a dialogue between these two people which shows the difference in their points of view about colonialism.

HANDS ON

these ideas down in a letter to your mother in Scotland. (You are about to give this letter to the captain of the ship you came on.)

- **Looking for the Niger**

The year: 1795; the place: The Gambia. Mungo Park has just arrived in West Africa, and is about to set off eastward to look for the Niger River.

Put yourself in Mungo's place, and try to draw up a plan of exploration. How will you go about starting to look for this river? Who will you ask? What things will you need to buy? How will you decide what direction to take? Write all

LET'S DISCUSS

- **Looking Back in Time**

Black people living in Canada and the United States, as well as in Africa, are becoming more and more interested in African history. For a long time, not much was written about African history, and Africans were given the impression that their history didn't really start until the Europeans arrived. Why do you think it's important for the world to learn about the early empires and cities of Nigeria?

MEDIA REPORT

- **1900: A Front-Line Report**

The year is 1900. You are a British reporter in Nigeria, which has just become a British colony. You are reporting back to the people in Britain about how colonization is going. You'll need to interview different people: colonizers, like George Goldie and Lord Lugard; missionaries; the Emir of Kano, who is still fighting the British and will not surrender for another three years; ordinary Nigerians.

Write a newspaper article, or the script of a radio "news clip," in which you interview several of these people to find out their feelings and reactions to what is happening.

LET'S FIND OUT

- **Glorious Empires**

Nigeria had many rich empires and cities in its early history: Kanem-Bornu, the Hausa City-States, Benin, Ife, and Oyo. There have been other powerful empires in African history. Some of them are these: Kush, Ghana, Mali, Songhay, Axum, Nubia, ancient Zimbabwe, the Zulu empire, and ancient Egypt. Choose one of these non-Nigerian empires, find out as much as you can about it, and write a report.



GOVERNMENT

Out of 30 years of Nigerian independence, 21 have been under military rule.

- *What were the problems faced by the first Nigerian government?*
- *Why is "coup" a common word in Nigeria?*
- *What is an open ballot system of voting?*

Civilian Government (1960 — 1966)

— Independence at Last! —

On October 1, 1960 the Federation of Nigeria became independent. Nigerians, after years of British rule, were excited and hopeful. Now they could finally govern themselves, and use the resources of their country for themselves rather than shipping them all off to Britain!

But there were problems. **Corruption** was a major stumbling-block to democracy. In the 1964 - 1965 elections, there were many complaints about undemocratic election practices. Sometimes people were elected because the election officials refused to accept the nomination papers of other candidates. Sometimes, the counting process was unfair. People who protested were sometimes attacked by followers of the opposing party.

Another problem was **regionalism**, where people from different regions thought only of their own region, rather than thinking about the whole country. This led to disagreement, and finally — in 1967 — to the Biafran war. (See page 25 for more information.) Finally, there was the problem of **inequality**. While some Nigerians were very wealthy, many were very poor, and getting poorer. The result — discontent and protest.

Civilian Rule — Military Rule (1966 on)

— Coup Upon Coup —

Nigerians started off with a parliament much like Canada's parliament. They had a Prime Minister, and a federal system in which some powers were given to the three regions (Eastern, Western and Northern) and other powers to the federal government. This didn't work too well, partly because of distrust between the different regions of Nigeria.

In 1966, some Ibo military officers staged a **coup**, and then the northerners staged another coup. For the next 13 years, through the civil war and after, Nigeria would be ruled by a military government. All the decisions about what would happen in Nigeria would be made by military officers.

General Yakubu Gowan was the governor of Nigeria during the Biafran war and after. His government tried to reduce corruption, and created a development plan to help Nigeria improve its industry, agriculture, education and health systems. They also attacked the problem of regionalism by creating 12 states to replace the three regions. After the war, Gowan said that by 1976 Nigeria would be ready for democratic elections, and he would step down. However, as 1976 approached, Gowan and his officers seemed more and more unwilling to step down. In 1975, Gowan left Nigeria for a visit to Uganda. While he was gone, his government was overthrown by another military coup, led by **Murtala Muhammed**.

General Murtala Muhammed quickly became a national hero. He fired all the police officers and administrators he thought were corrupt. He drew up plans for a new constitution, and prepared for a quick return to a democratic government. Then, just as Nigerians began to feel things were really improving, General Muhammed was assassinated by a group of soldiers loyal to General Gowan.



Yakubu Gowan — Nigeria's first military governor

General Muhammed's successor, **Olusegun Obasanjo**, tried to quickly get a constitution drawn up, and hold an election. The new constitution included plans for a new kind of government, this one with a president, more like the government of the United States. By now, the number of states had grown from 12 to 19, each with its own state government. Under Obasanjo, plans were drawn up for a system of free primary education for everyone. Seven new universities were created. In 1978, new political parties began to form in preparation for the coming elections. A special committee was given the power to check the parties to make sure each was a national party, and not just a regional party, or else it wouldn't be allowed to participate in the election. In the end, five national parties were recognized.

In 1979, Nigeria finally had an election. **Shehu Shagari**, of the National Party of Nigeria, won. Shagari, banking on Nigeria's oil boom, began spending money on industry and services. Some Nigerians became very rich, but many became poorer. From 1980 to 1982, many of the poor people around the northern city of Kano rioted, and hundreds were killed. Shagari's government began to be accused of corruption. In 1982 oil prices dropped, and Shagari had to quickly cut back on government spending. The poor got poorer and more discontented. In the next elections, in 1983, Shagari once again won the elections, but many Nigerians complained that he had won unfairly, by using huge amounts of money, and by bribes and corruption. On New Year's Eve, 1983, Shagari was overthrown in yet another military coup.

This time the military leader was Major-General **Muhammadu Buhari**, who ruled Nigeria along with a committee of military and non-military people. Buhari's government arrested many of the politicians in Shagari's government, and took them to court for corruption. They also restricted the media, arresting some journalists for "spreading rumours." They arrested others who they thought were a "threat to the state." Because Nigeria continued to have debt problems, Buhari's government had to cut back on spending. Buhari became less and less popular.

In 1985, Buhari was overthrown by **Ibrahim Babangida**, who is the current president of Nigeria. Babangida replaced all the state governors, making sure the new governors were military officers. He replaced Buhari's ruling committee with a 28-member Armed Forces Ruling Council, and in 1987 he created two new states, bringing the total number up to 21 states.

President Babangida has done a number of unpopular things, such as reducing the pay of the army, university teachers, and civil servants. His government continues to arrest people who they consider dangerous to the government, and to hold them for up to six months — and sometimes longer — without trial. Newspapers which criticize the government are sometimes shut down.

University students have protested against Babangida. They feel the military

government is not allowing the Nigerian people to have basic human rights. In May 1987, fifteen students were shot dead by police at Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria, during a protest march. Marches and meetings were then banned, but protest has continued anyway.

There have been two coup attempts against Babangida's government, but both have failed.



**Ibrahim Babangida —
the President of Nigeria today**

— Return to Civilian Rule? —

Nigerians have recently been able to elect representatives for their local region. This election was carried out in a way Canadians would find very strange. Instead of the "secret ballot" method, where people mark an X next to their favourite candidate, the Nigerians used an "open ballot" system. Two party representatives stood in front of the polling station, and the voters lined up behind their candidate. The government said this system was necessary, because everyone could see who had won, and no one would be able to cheat. Many Nigerians complained about the open ballot system; they said people could easily be bribed or threatened to change from one line to another.

President Babangida first promised new elections for a national government in 1990, but has now changed the date to 1992. Two new political parties have been allowed — but only two, even though some other Nigerians wanted to form parties. They are the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the Nigerian Republican Convention (NRC). President Babangida hopes that because there are only two parties, there will no longer be the problem of Yorubas voting for Yorubas, Hausas voting for Hausas, and Ibos voting for Ibos.

According to an old Yoruba saying, "Only the thing for which you have struggled will last." And in 1992, the world will hold its breath — and I'll bet you will, too — in the hope Nigeria will finally, after all these years of struggle, be able to overcome its regional and religious differences, and the corruption which seems so hard to wipe out, and have fair, democratic government.

The Capital Question

The capital city of Nigeria is Lagos, a crowded, bustling city of 5 million people. Lagos was developed by the British as a port, convenient for shipping loads of palm oil, tropical wood, groundnuts and cotton to British mills. But is Lagos the best capital for Nigeria? It's right in the middle of Yoruba territory, and the Hausa, Ibo, and other Nigerian peoples don't like that. It's not a very good place to run the country, because it's on the edge of Nigeria, rather than in the middle where it would be equally distant from all of Nigeria's people.

If you look at the map of Nigeria, right in the middle you can see a little territory called the Federal Capital Territory, and in the middle of that you can see Abuja. In 1976, the military government decided to move the capital of Nigeria to Abuja. The government hoped that having the capital in the middle of the country, and in an area which is not the homeland of any of the major tribal groups, would encourage cooperation.

Unfortunately, soon after the building of Abuja's new roads and buildings began, the price of oil went down, and the Nigerian government ran out of money. So the move has been a slow one. However, many government offices are now in Abuja.

Nigeria is not alone in its "capital question." If you look at a map of Africa, you'll see that most of the capitals are on the coast, which was convenient for the colonial powers, but is not very convenient for the Africans who live there.



Lagos — the best capital for Nigeria?

— Counting Up: A Nigerian Census —

In order to have federal elections in 1992, Nigeria must have a census in November 1991. This means everyone in the country has to be listed. The last census was taken in 1963, when the population was 56 million, about half of what it is now. A lot of Nigerians are very suspicious and fearful of a census. Why? Southerners fear there are now more northern Muslims than southerners, and that they will control Nigeria. Each group fears that corrupt census-takers will leave some people off the list and inflate the figures for other groups. The census is important for the election, because it is only after the census has been taken that the election boundaries can be drawn.

Some groups hope the census will prove they should have more states in their region. The Ibos, who claim they are about 25% of Nigeria's people, point out that they have only two states, plus one they share with other groups, while the Yorubas, with a similar number, have five states.

As Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe says: "A census is an absolute necessity in a modern state but we are afraid to know how many we are."

In Nigeria, eleven babies are born every minute. But since 1963, there hasn't been a proper census to count up just who lives where, and how many people there really are in Nigeria. If the government plan goes ahead, this baby will finally get counted in November 1991.



— Activities —

POINTS OF VIEW



Hopes and Dreams for a Free Nigeria

1960: Imagine you were a Nigerian girl or boy at the time of independence. You are at the independence ceremonies, when the new Nigerian flag, with its stripes of green and white, is unfurled. Write an entry in your diary for the day of October 1, 1960. How do you feel to be free of British rule? Why? What are your hopes and fears for the future?

1990: It's 30 years later. Some of your hopes have come true, but some of your worst fears have come true, too. Things haven't been easy for Nigeria in the years between 1960 and 1990. Write an entry in your diary for the day of October 1, 1990.

HANDS ON



• Form a Government

It's 1960, and a group of people have been elected to form a government for the newly independent country of Nigeria. In groups of 6 to 8, decide how you will organize yourselves to govern the country.

★ What Ministers will you need? (people to be in charge of an important area, such as industry, or education, or . . . you decide!)

★ What things should your government — the national government — be in charge of, and what things should the state governments be in charge of?

★ How will you make sure that the people of Nigeria can give you their opinions?

★ What rules will you have to make sure that there is no corruption and that things are fair?

After you've decided these things, put all this information in a large chart. Be prepared to show it to the rest of the class, and explain why you decided to organize yourselves in this way.

LET'S DISCUSS



• What problems did Nigeria face after independence? Do you think we have any of these problems in Canada or in the United States?

• There are frequent fierce protests against the government of Nigeria, many of them about **human rights**. What do we mean when we talk about human rights? What human rights do we have in Canada or the United States? Why do some people think it is harder to have human rights when there is a military government in power, rather than an elected government?

- What are the good points and bad points about the secret ballot and open ballot methods of voting? If you lived in Nigeria, which method would you prefer and why?

MEDIA REPORT



• If I Get Elected . . .

As the 1992 elections approach, people in Nigeria are getting excited. After nine years of military government, they will once again be allowed to vote for the people whom they would like to run their country. You are a young politician who is running for office, and you want very much to get in, because you have some ideas about new directions for Nigeria. Write the speech which you will

give to the people in your town. The things you might especially want to talk about are these:

- | | | |
|---------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| ★ regionalism | ★ natural resources | ★ education |
| ★ corruption | ★ the environment | ★ human rights |
| ★ inequality | ★ debt | ★ military spending |

What can be done about all of these things?

LET'S FIND OUT



• Nigeria and Us: Comparing Governments

Compare the governments of Nigeria and your country. Find out these things about your own country:

- ★ Was your country ever a colony? When did it become independent?
- ★ How many states or provinces are there?
- ★ What kind of government is there?
- ★ What are the things that your government has to

decide about in order to make the country run smoothly?

Now, compare Nigeria. In what ways are the Nigerian government and the government of your country similar? In what ways are they different?



PEOPLE

"The world should see Nigeria for what it is: the country with the largest concentration of black people on earth and therefore the torchbearer for the black race."

— Prince Tony Momoh, Minister of Information, Nigerian government, 1987.

- ***Why doesn't Nigeria have very many homes for seniors?***
- ***North America has a "greying population," while Nigeria has a "junior population." Why is that?***

— A Multi-Cultural Country —

Imagine — a country the size of B.C. with people speaking over 300 different languages, each group with its own customs, its own way of dressing, its own way of preparing food, of building homes . . . of just about everything! Although there are hundreds of different peoples in Nigeria, there are four main groups: the Hausa and Fulani people in the north, the Yoruba people in the southwest, and the Ibo people in the southeast. If you were a Nigerian gecko — a small, harmless lizard — getting a gecko's-eye view of Nigerian homes in different parts of the country, you'd probably find quite a few differences but a lot of similarities between families in the north, east and west of Nigeria.

— The Yoruba People —

The Yoruba, in the southwest, are the second largest group in Nigeria with about 20 percent of the population. They tend to live in cities and large towns. Yoruba families — like most Nigerian families — have a lot of people in them. If you were a Yoruba child you would probably live with your father and mother and

brothers and sisters, just like a Canadian child. As well, you might have a cousin or two who is living with your family so that they can go to secondary school. And your grandparents, your aunts, uncles and cousins would probably live near you, either in the same large house or in other houses nearby. Life would seem like one big family reunion! Sometimes a Yoruba child will call aunts "Mummy" before their name — "Mummy Anna," or "Mummy Ayesha" — and their uncles "Dad Thomas" or "Dad Tunde." That is because in a Yoruba household, the children are brought up not just by their parents, but by all of their adult relatives. A name we sometimes use for this big family is the **extended family**.

Yoruba houses are usually rectangular, with lots of room for many family members, and are built of bricks or cement blocks. In a traditional Yoruba home the roof is thatched with straw. The thatch helps to keep the house cool when it's hot outside, and warm when it's cool outside. However, most modern houses have roofs made of zinc or corrugated iron. These last longer than thatch but heat up faster, and become very, very noisy when it rains. Because Yoruba cities are growing fast, there isn't always room to build the traditional large Yoruba houses, and today many Yoruba people live in city apartments.

Many Yoruba men are farmers, living in villages or towns and walking to the farm each day. Sometimes a small house is built on the farm, and the farmer will occasionally stay overnight there, bringing back food — peppers, cassava, yams — for his family. Yoruba women don't farm as much as most Nigerian women. Instead, they are the traders of Yorubaland. This area of Nigeria is famous for its "market mammies" — women who buy bolts of cloth or other wholesale goods and sell these wares in the market.

The cooking in a Yoruba family is shared between the women of the family. In the past the cooking was done over a wood fire, but now wood is becoming very scarce and more Nigerians are cooking with other fuels such as



A Yoruba extended family

kerosene. A favourite Yoruba food is *eba* — a kind of porridge made from cassava, a root crop very popular in all parts of Nigeria. *Eba* is not what you'd call a fast food. The cassava plants are peeled and ground into a pulp. For several days, the pulp must be pressed to get rid of the cyanide — a kind of poison — in the cassava. The pulp is then fried in palm oil until it breaks into little grains called *gari*. When you mash the *gari* in hot water, you get *eba*. Nowadays, Yoruba women who can afford it can buy *gari* in packages and just add boiling water.

When you take a little piece of *eba* in your hand and dip it into pepper soup, which is a hot, spicy sauce with meat in it, you get a delicious mouthful! Yoruba families always try to cook a little extra in case a visitor arrives around mealtime. Hospitality is important to the Yoruba; they never like to turn anyone away.

Growing Up Yoruba

— Olutoke (Yoruba for "God is enough to care for me") —

Olutoke (o - loo - too- kay) jumps out of bed and runs to the window. It's early morning, but she can already hear the sounds of Ibadan. A car horn, blasted by an impatient driver, cuts across the morning air. People shout greetings to each other as they head along the street to open up their stores or set up stalls in the market. Taxis head towards the city centre. A motorcycle, driven by a man with his *agbada* (loose robe) flapping in the breeze, weaves in and out of the taxis. Olutoke can see the man's briefcase strapped onto the back of his motorbike; he must be on his way to work.

It must be time to get the breakfast and Gloria is still asleep. Olutoke shakes her shoulder. "Gloria, it's time to get the water!" Gloria is Olutoke's cousin, and she always has trouble getting up in the mornings. Quickly the girls pull on their blue cotton blouses and skirts and tie their shoes, ready for school. They each take a water bucket and run as fast as they can to the public tap, a few hundred meters from their house. If they don't get there early enough, they'll have to wait in a long line-up. Being careful not to slop their water, they hurry home. Olutoke's mother is waiting for the water. "Hurry up!" she scolds. "Your daddy needs to wash, and we need to boil some water for his tea!" Olutoke's dad works in a big office in town, and he likes to leave the house early to avoid the worst traffic. Olutoke's mother is in a hurry, too, because she needs to open up her fabric shop and get the bolts of cloth arranged before the customers begin to arrive. "Ayo! James!" she calls up the stairs to Olutoke's brothers. "Come quickly or you'll be late for school!"

Olutoke's mother opens the door of the refrigerator. "Here is the lunch I made last night: soup and *eba*. If I'm not home by three o'clock, you should eat without me. It may be busy today, and I'm not sure when I can get home." Olutoke thinks about how hard her mother works, selling all day in her shop and working at night to clean the house and prepare the next day's food.

"But can't we come and help you at the shop after school?" asks Gloria. Gloria loves

to feel all the fine cloths in the shop. "Well, if you don't have any work at school to keep you," says Olutoke's mother. "I promised my sister I would make sure you do well in school, Gloria. Now, hurry off, all of you, or you'll be late."

"Wash your face, James!" Olutoke commands her little brother, as she pours some water into a basin. "And make sure you have all your books!" She checks her school bag to make sure her homework is there, and her house key to get back in after school. Then she takes James' hand, and runs with the other children down the stairs, past the cars and taxis, past the shops, now beginning to open, past the women selling hot spicy food, and on to school.

—The Ibo People—

About 17 percent of Nigerians are Ibo people (sometimes spelled Igbo). Their name — Ibo — can be translated as "forest dwellers" or "community," and at one time the Ibo people lived in small rainforest villages, each village ruled by a council of elders. Most Ibos still live in the southeast part of Nigeria. But modern Iboland is no longer a collection of small villages nestled in the forest. The villages have expanded into the surrounding forest. They are linked by paved roads and many of them have electricity.

The Ibo are known throughout Nigeria as being ambitious and energetic people. They were the first group of Nigerians to be educated by the British, and they value education very highly. If you talk to an Ibo boy or girl, you'll probably find they are working very hard at school and they are determined to get a good job and do well in the world. Like the Yoruba, the Ibo people have a very strong sense of family. If you were an Ibo girl or boy, you would live in a walled **compound** with your father and mother, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles and cousins. A compound is a collection of small huts surrounded by a wall or hedge. There is a kitchen hut, and perhaps a food storage hut, and sleeping huts. Around all of the huts is a high mud-brick wall.

As well as this family, there are other more distant aunts, uncles and cousins who live not too far away. This larger family is called the *umunna*. If you are ever in trouble or if you ever really need anything, the members of your *umunna* will help you. Many Ibo people leave their village and their *umunna* to work in other areas of Nigeria. But the village and the *umunna* always remain important. During holiday times Ibo people will travel long distances to visit their village and their relatives. For no matter where they live, the village is always their home.

Growing up Ibo

— Chukwuemeka (Ibo for “God has done well for me”) —

In 1978, a son was born to a young Ibo woman named Ihuna. Ihuna was overjoyed at the birth of her first baby, and so were the members of her family. On the eighth day after the baby was born, all of the members of the umunna — aunts, uncles, distant cousins — arrived to name the baby and to celebrate his birth.

The boy was named Chukwuemeka (Choó-kwoo-e-meé-ka), which means “God has done well for me.” Many Ibo names contain the Ibo word for God — Chukwu. Because the baby’s name was so long, everyone called him Emeka for short.

When Emeka was a baby, Ihuna carried him in a piece of cloth tied tightly around her wherever she went — to the fields to work, or to the market to sell some of her delicious beancakes. Like most Nigerian babies, Emeka hardly ever cried because he was always close to his mother. Whenever he started to cry, he would be fed and cuddled right away.

Emeka’s father, Nwobodo, works on the oil rigs. He is lucky to have this job. The average Nigerian income is \$340 per year — not really enough to live on very easily. Emeka’s father makes a lot more than this, although the family is still not rich. Nwobodo and Ihuna, as well as taking care of Emeka, also take care of Emeka’s two cousins who come from a very poor family. If they didn’t live with Emeka’s family, and if Emeka’s mother and father didn’t pay for their uniforms and books, they wouldn’t be able to go to school. Nigerians often help each other out this way.

Today a guest is expected at Emeka’s house. Reverend Abraham Owo, the minister of Emeka’s church, arrives with his wife Grace and their five children. Emeka’s family is Christian, as are many Ibo families. It is an honour to have the minister visit, and Ihuna rushes to the food cupboard to find a kola nut. The kola nut is smooth and round, with a very, very bitter taste. When a visitor arrives, she or he is offered a piece of the kola nut, and all of the people in the room take a piece as well. The kola nut is used in one of the world’s favourite drinks, Coca Cola, and is also used by Nigerians to keep themselves awake, as it is a stimulant much like coffee.

Emeka’s favourite hobbies are soccer and dancing. Even though he hasn’t yet started school, he often practices soccer with the other village boys. Soccer is very popular with boys all over Nigeria, and Emeka is determined to become a star player. But even more, Emeka and his cousins like to dance. Although they don’t own televisions and many of the other things you might find in a Canadian family, Emeka’s family, like most Nigerian families, has a radio.

“Come on — let’s dance!” says Emeka to the visiting children. The children turn on the radio and find a station playing popular modern African music with a cheerful, jazzy beat. And there in the hot courtyard of Emeka’s compound they twist their bodies to the rhythm of the music, a blend of the old African rhythms and modern electric guitars.

— Adapted from *Nigeria*, by Leslie Semaan

The Hausa People

Many years ago, Bayajidda, the brave prince from Baghdad, came across the desert to Daura. Daura was a city with a great problem. Its only well was occupied by a snake. The people of Daura had tried everything to get rid of the snake, but no one could defeat him. Bayajidda killed the snake, and married the Queen of Daura. They had one son, Bawo. Bawo married and had seven sons. They became rulers of the seven Hausa states.

— A Hausa Story, told by parents to their children

The Hausa people are the largest ethnic group in Nigeria with about 20 percent of the population. They live in the north of Nigeria and are descended from the proud people who once founded the Hausa city-states (see page 15). Like the other peoples of Nigeria, the Hausa people live in large family groups. Because most Hausas are Muslim, husbands may marry more than one wife, so often families have two or three wives and lots of children.

If you went to a Hausa village, you would see compounds of small round houses topped with cone-shaped thatched roofs. There is a house for each wife and her children, and one for the father. Some are built of small sticks and corn stalks which are covered with mud. Some are built of dried mud-bricks which are then covered with mud plaster. The insides of the houses are either white-washed with a white limestone paint or smoothly coated with red clay.

Houses in the town are much different. They are also built of mud-bricks covered with mud plaster, but are large, rectangular houses with flat roofs, usually with many rooms built around a courtyard. There are entrance halls, a storeroom,

***The home of a
wealthy Hausa
family***



and separate rooms for the wives. Inside, the walls are painted with limestone or red clay, and coarse sand or gravel is beaten into the floor to make it hard and smooth.

If you lived in a Hausa city like Kano or Sokoto, your father might be a trader — Hausa traders are famous all over West Africa — or he might have a job in a shop or government office. Your mother would probably stay at home. If you lived in the country, your family would be farmers. You would help in the fields with the planting, weeding and harvesting.

Almost all of the Hausa, like the other people of the north — the Kanuri and Fulani — are Muslim. Muslims in Nigeria, like the Christians there also, are very serious about their religion. Five times a day, Muslims bow down in prayer, facing the sacred city of Mecca, which is in Saudi Arabia. Muslims will not eat pork and will not drink alcohol. Once a year, Muslims *fast* for a whole month. During this time, which is called *Ramadan*, they don't eat or drink anything between sunrise and sunset. Ramadan happens at a different time each year, depending on the Muslim calendar which follows the cycles of the moon. Often Ramadan falls during a hot time of the year, so it is very difficult for people not to drink anything at all during the day. If you were a student at a school in northern Nigeria, you wouldn't be surprised to see a student faint because of the heat and thirst. Yet all Muslims,

except for the very old and very young and women who are expecting babies, undertake this fast each year. At the end of Ramadan, there is a great celebration — Sallah. There is feasting all over northern Nigeria.

If you went to one of the great northern cities — Kano, Sokoto, Kaduna or Zaria — for Sallah, you would see horsemen dressed in fine brocaded cloth, riding horses which are also dressed up, in tassles and fine saddles. The horsemen have ridden in from the small towns to pay their respect to the emir



A proud Hausa horseman arrives to show his respect to the Emir

— the ruler of the city. After a grand parade, with the emir riding under a huge umbrella and with desert camels and fine horses ridden by even finer horsemen, you would make your way to a large field where the *darbar* would take place. The *darbar* is the traditional way in which the chiefs of outlying areas, and other important men, show their loyalty to the emir. At one end of the field are the horsemen in all their finery, holding scimitars — fine, razor-sharp swords. At the other end of the field is the emir, sitting in a chair. A group of horsemen begins to ride side by side across the field towards the emir. Faster and faster they ride, waving their sharp scimitars. Nearer and nearer to the emir they come. The crowd holds its breath as the line of horses approaches the emir, sitting on his chair. Suddenly, only a few feet from the emir, the horses all stop, reined in by their masters. "*Ronkya a dadi!*" ("May you live a long time!") shout the riders as they wave their scimitars in the air. Once more, they have proved their loyalty to the emir.

If you were a Hausa, you might go to a koranic school early in the morning, before your regular school started. There you would learn about the Koran, the Muslim holy book, and also how to read and write Arabic, the language in which the Koran is written. If you were a Hausa girl, you might have to get used to the idea of *purdah*, the strict Muslim practice of keeping women at home. To find out more about this, read the section about Nigerian women on page 54.

(To read a story about a Hausa girl, turn to page 55.)



The Emir arrives for the parade.

— Nigeria's Nomads — the Fulani —

In the south of Nigeria, the only farm animals you are likely to see are goats and sheep. You have to go to the north to find cattle country. Here you will see, wandering across the dry savanna, herds of long-horned cattle with humps on their backs, called *Zebu* cattle, driven along by men wearing loose white tunics and hats of straw trimmed with leather — the Fulani herders. Right across the northern part of Nigeria and its neighbouring countries — Cameroon, Mali and Guinea, and up into the semi-desert land of Niger, roam the nomadic Fulani people — about 6 million of them in all. They are the “cowboys” of West Africa, walking across vast areas of land with their herds of cattle, seeking out sources of water and food and driving their herds to the cattle markets. Most of the original Fulani people have settled in the towns and cities, leaving their nomadic lives behind. But there are still many independent *borroroje* — nomadic Fulani — who are always on the move. Some “old-style” Fulani herders drive their cattle all the way from the north to the cattle markets of the south — Ibadan and Lagos — but the more modern Fulani herders load their cattle onto the train instead.

The *Zebu* cattle are well adapted to the dry conditions of the north. They don't need much water or protein and they can feed on “leftovers” — the dry stalks of sorghum and other crops left over after the harvest. In return, they leave a bonus — *Zebu* manure — which enriches the soil for the next crop.

As northern Nigeria has become dryer, many people have blamed the Fulani herders for desertification (the turning of land into desert), saying that it is caused by the cattle, who trample the soil and eat the grass. All over Africa there are groups of nomadic herders, and they are often blamed for erosion problems. But the Fulani and their cattle have used this land for centuries without eroding it. Recently, farmers have begun to move into the grassland areas to plant their crops and the Fulani herders have had less land for their cattle. The result: erosion.

Often the Fulani have more cattle than they really need. But most Fulani people will explain to you that they have no insurance, and that they must rely on their cattle. To the Fulani, having extra cattle is like having money in the bank. They need to have extra cattle in case of emergency — outbreak of a disease among the cattle, or drought.

It's not easy being a *borroroje*. Until recently, most Fulani children couldn't attend school, because their families were always on the move. Now, the government has started “nomadic schools,” with Fulani teachers hired to follow the people and the herds.

The life of constant travel is a hard one. But for many Fulani, it's the only life they know, and they are happy to keep on travelling, surrounded by their cattle.

Growing up Fulani

Rikku

Here's someone you might like to know. Rikku Sunsaye is 13 years old and he has driven cattle for as long as he can remember. He wears a loose white smock and often carries a long stick. Rikku could show you how to make a *lukuri* — a bed made out of leaves, branches and thatch. He would build a little hut by digging branches into the hard, dry ground, bending them over to make a frame, filling it with dry grass, and weaving a roof of thatch over the top. He could also show you how to build a fence out of thorns to keep the cattle in and the hyenas out.

Rikku is a herder. Because he is the youngest son, he gets the long, hard job of watching and herding the cattle. His oldest brother, Jalla, who is 20, is beginning to do the interesting work, learning how to decide when to move the cattle, where to go, when to sell.

Very early in the morning Rikku's mother gets up and — with the help of Rikku's sister, Talatu — she ties up the hind legs of the cows which have milk. She and Talatu milk the cows, collecting the milk in big *calabashes* — bowls made from gourds. Some of the milk will be used for fresh milk for the family (*madara*); some will be soured, rather like yoghurt (*nono*), and some will be made into butter and cheese (*mai*). When the cows give a lot of milk, Rikku's mother will take the extra yoghurt and cheese to market in the nearest town. With the money she gets at market, she might buy a chicken for the family. Although the nomadic Fulani spend all their lives with cattle, they rarely eat beef. Their main food is dairy products, and they also like rice, bean cakes, and chicken.

Today Rikku is both happy and worried. Happy, because he has now finished primary school and he's glad to be back with his family. In order to go to school Rikku lived with his aunts and uncle in Katsina for a few years. Rikku's aunts and uncle are *Fulani Gida* — "town Fulani" — who have stopped driving the cattle and settled in town.

At school Rikku learned a lot of useful things. He learned to read, and do arithmetic, and he learned to speak English, which will help him when he goes to the cattle markets in



A Fulani boy, with traditional dress and hair style

Lagos or Ibadan. Here in the north Rikku speaks Ffulde, the language of the Fulani —or Hausa, the language of the north. In school, too, Rikku learned the name for the problem which, year by year, is threatening his people—the name for the growing dryness of the land. It is called **desertification**, and it makes it harder and harder to find food and water for the herds.

But right now Rikku has another worry. His father is beginning to plan for Rikku's **sharo** ceremony. It is an old Fulani tradition that young men, to prove their bravery before they marry, must undergo a **sharo** ceremony. On a busy market day, to the music of traditional Fulani drums, the people from Rikku's family and other Fulani families will form a circle. Rikku, holding his stick high with both hands, will step into the circle. One of his friends will appear, holding a narrow, bending stick. Rikku will have to dance around as the stick hits him, again and again. A mirror will be held up to him by his friends, so he can make sure he isn't showing any signs of pain. If he fails he will have to undergo another **sharo** before he is allowed to marry.

Many families have stopped taking part in the **sharo** ceremony, saying that it's old-fashioned and dangerous. But Rikku's father believes in the old traditions. He'll be really disappointed in Rikku if he doesn't have a **sharo** ceremony. And his older brothers — they went through **sharo** and they expect it of him, too. What should he do? Rikku kicks a pebble across the dry grassland and frowns.

Suddenly he notices one of the cattle has become separated from the others. Off he runs and forgets his worry for now.



Life on the move — a temporary Fulani home

The Nigerian Family

"A person without relatives is as good as dead."

— African proverb

One of the first things most visitors to Nigeria notice is the importance of the family. In North America many of us live far away from our aunts, uncles and grandparents. In Nigeria the extended family usually lives close together. Often this means that daycare and cooking can be shared by the women in the family. The ties of family are very strong in Nigeria. If someone in the family does well and gets a good job, she or he is expected to send back money to help other family members.

Nigerian children grow up in a world of mixed ages. Right from the time they are tiny, bouncing along on their mothers' backs, they are taken to the farm, to market, to funerals, to church, and to parties. There are few nursery schools or play groups in Nigeria. Nigerian children are expected to take part in family life, and to go wherever their parents go.

Old people in Nigeria are also part of the general life of the family. There aren't very many old people's homes because grannies and grandads live with their sons, daughters-in-law and grandchildren. Until quite recently, only a small percentage of Nigerians could read, and all the important stories, proverbs (wise sayings), and information about things like farming or history were kept in people's memories. This meant that old people — or elders, as they are often called in Nigeria — were very important, because they had a lot of information stored in their memories. Even now, when young people graduate from school or university with all sorts of "book learning," they respect the older people in their family. A Yoruba proverb goes like this: "What an old man sees while lying down a young man can never see even when he climbs up in a tree."

However, fewer Nigerians are



In Nigeria, many generations live under one roof.

staying in their villages. As more and more people move to the city, often the grandparents are left back in the village. For the first time, older people are beginning to feel they are not useful and important. In some areas homes for the aged are beginning to be built. Most Nigerians do not want their grandparents to be put in these homes. But with the cramped housing of the city it is often impossible to take grandparents along.

Marriage customs are changing in Nigeria. At one time, marriages were arranged by the parents, and a "bride-price" — a payment of cattle, palm wine, or cowrie shells — was paid to the family of the bride. Nowadays many families still follow this custom, with the bride-price including a payment of cash. But some of the more westernized young people, especially university students, now arrange their own marriages. Traditional marriage ceremonies are different for each region, but they are usually long celebrations which go on for several days. In the cities of the south, young people often choose a western-style wedding with a white dress and fancy iced cake.

Even though living patterns and customs are changing in Nigeria, one thing remains the same: the importance of the family, all working together.

Clothing

— Dressing Up Nigerian-Style

If you walk down a city street in Nigeria, you will see men wearing majestic, flowing robes and men in western business suits. You will see women with traditional embroidered blouses and wrappers, and women wearing western dresses. For Nigeria is a mixture of the old and the new, a country in the midst of change. Most Nigerians enjoy wearing their traditional clothes, at least for special occasions. And in northern Nigeria many people wear their traditional dress all the time.

A typical outfit for Yoruba and Hausa women is a wide blouse tucked into a wrapper, a length of cloth which is wrapped tightly around the waist. Ibo women often wear two wrappers, a shorter one on top of



An Ibo woman displays her double wrapper, headcloth and blouse.

a long one, and Fulani women wear their wrappers tied high across the chest over a short-sleeved blouse. Often a woman will wear a large headcloth to match her wrapper or blouse. Women in the south may decide not to wear their headcloths, and instead show off their hairstyles: hair done in tiny braids or in small sections wound with black thread. Women in the north always cover their hair with a cloth.

Yoruba and Hausa men wear flowing robes known as *rigas* (Hausa) and *agbadas* (Yoruba). These are often embroidered around the neck and down the front, and are worn over baggy trousers. Ibo men wear a cloth wrapper and a long shirt or singlet.

Most children wear light-weight, short-sleeved clothes much like you would wear in the summer, although boys in the north often wear loose caftans and girls sometimes wear wrappers like their mothers.

Food

— Down-Home Cooking in Nigeria —

Nigerians who come to Canada usually find our food very bland . . . lacking in spice . . . in fact — boring! Nigerians who work in the fields usually eat two meals a day: a small morning meal of porridge or bread, and a large evening meal. People who live in cities eat three meals a day: early breakfast, late lunch, and an evening meal. For them, lunch is the big meal of the day. For lunch there will probably be a great big bowl of rice, or pounded yam, or *eba* (made from cassava), or maize porridge — something to “stick to your ribs.” And to spice it up, a hot, spicy “soup.” The “soup” is usually more like a stew, with some meat and perhaps some tomatoes and other vegetables, and lots and lots of hot little peppers. Food is usually eaten right in your hand. You pick up a bit of pounded yam, or *eba*, and dip it in some of the soup. Instead of soup, a Nigerian family might eat palm-oil chop (“chop” is Nigerian slang for food) — chicken or beef fried in palm oil and spiced with pepper. Nigerians don’t eat many desserts but there’s often a piece of fruit — mango, pineapple, papaya, or orange — to finish off a meal.

Much of Nigerian food is difficult and time-consuming to prepare, and the preparation of food is considered “women’s work.” Buying all the ingredients, grinding or pounding them, simmering them over a fire — all of this makes a long day for women who have worked in the fields or in an office. Often in the evening you will hear the bong, bong, bong sound of women pounding yams. The yams — which are rather like foot-long potatoes — are boiled, then pounded with a large wooden club until they form a big, smooth ball, a bit like uncooked bread dough. The result of all this work is wonderful, spicy food, fit for an emir.

Nigerian Recipes

Groundnut Stew

Ingredients:

- 1 chicken, cut into pieces
- 1/2 onion
- 2 tbsp. tomato paste
- 1 tbsp. cooking oil
- 1 cup onion, chopped
- 1 cup tomatoes, chopped
(canned will do)
- 2/3 cup peanut butter
- 2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. cayenne pepper

Method:

- Add the pieces of chicken and the half-onion to 2 cups of water, bring to a boil, and simmer for half an hour, until tender.
- In a separate pot, fry the chopped onion until soft, add the tomato paste and chopped tomatoes. Add the broth from the chicken. Add the peanut butter, making sure you stir until it's smooth. Add salt, cayenne, then pieces of chicken.
- Simmer for a few minutes, then serve with rice or "pounded yam."

"Pounded Yam"

(In this version North American ingredients replace the yams, but the total effect is surprisingly authentic.)

Ingredients:

- 2 1/2 cups Bisquick
- 1 1/2 cups instant potato flakes

Method:

- Bring 6 cups of water to a rapid boil in a large, heavy pot.

- Combine the 2 ingredients and add to the water.
- Stir constantly for 10-15 minutes. You will need 2 people; it's hard work!
- What you should end up with is a large ball of doughy texture. Each person takes a bit of pounded yam, dips it in the stew, and eats.

Recipes adapted from The Africa News Cookbook, Tami Hultman, Penguin, 1985



Pounding yams

What do Nigerians do When There's Nothing to Do?

— Ayo —

Just like people in North America, Nigerians like to do all sorts of things in their spare time. They read, they listen to the radio, in the cities some of them watch television. All over Nigeria, and in other parts of Africa, there is a favourite game that almost everyone can play. The Yoruba name for it is *ayo*. Sometimes it's played on fancy carved wooden boards; sometimes people make an "instant" board by scooping out fourteen little hollows in the ground. You can make your own ayo board with an egg carton and dried beans.

Making an Ayo Game

Materials:

- 1 egg carton
- 2 paper cups
- 48 dried beans, such as kidney beans

To Play

- This game needs 2 players.
- Players sit at each end of the egg carton, and each player chooses a side. Each player has her/his own cup, to hold the beans which s/he wins.
- Put four beans into each of the 12 holes.

Action

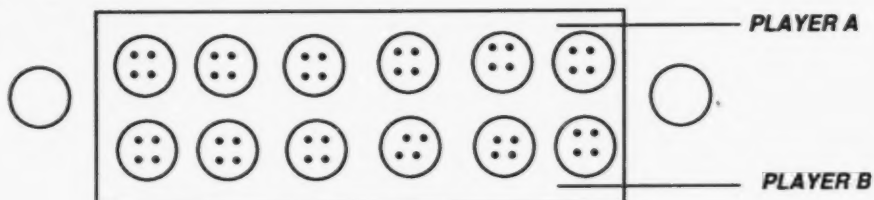
- Decide who will start (it's best to take turns starting).
- Players always move counter-clockwise. The first player takes all the beans from any hole on her/his side of the board and, beginning with the next hole, places one bean into each succeeding hole until her/his hand is empty. The next player does the same.
- When the last bean in a player's hand lands on her/his opponent's side of the board in a hole which contains 1 or 2 beans, s/he collects all the beans in that hole. (In other words, the player will collect either 2 or 3 beans.) The "winnings" are stored in the player's paper cup. The first player to collect 25 or more of the beans is the winner!
- Remember, each time it's your turn, you must pick up all the beans from one of the holes on your side, and drop them into each hole counter-clockwise.

Good Tactics

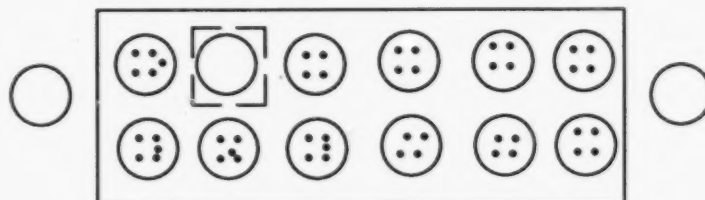
- Always try to keep three or more beans in the holes on your side of the board, or leave the holes empty. That way, your opponent won't be able to collect any beans.

— Playing Ayo —

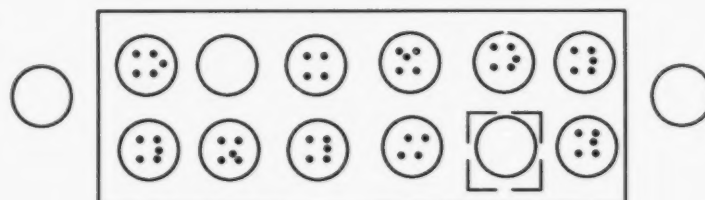
**Starting
Up:**



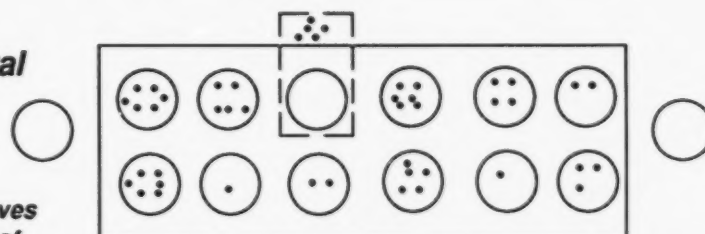
**First
Move:**



**Second
Move:**



**...Several
Moves
Later**



*Player A moves
and takes 2 of
player B's
counters.*



**Two Yoruba
men enjoy a
game of ayo**

Nigerian Women

— It's Not Easy —

In the north of Nigeria, wives of wealthy husbands have for centuries lived in *purdah* or (in Hausa) *kulle*. This means they don't leave their homes, and other people — especially their children — do the shopping, delivering, or selling that needs to be done outside. These women may have women visitors in their houses or courtyards, but men are seldom allowed to see them.

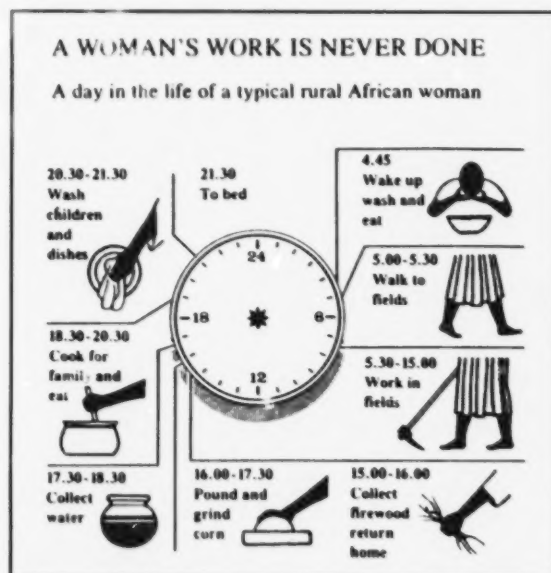
At one time it was only wealthy men who kept their wives at home like this, but in the past century *purdah* has been on the increase in poorer homes, especially in the towns and cities. Small girls are allowed to go outside their compounds, attend school, and play, but at the age of thirteen or fourteen they enter *purdah*. The girls and women often work — preparing cooked food to be sold outside by the young children, sewing or doing other handicrafts. Imagine you were a Nigerian girl about to enter *purdah*. How would this change your life?

Many rural women in the north, however, are not in *purdah*. They work in their gardens to raise food for their families, and they cook and clean as well.

In the south, women are generally expected to work very hard to help with the family income. As well as growing crops and doing the work of the household, the women are often traders. They buy cloth or other manufactured goods to sell in the market or by the side of the road. Often they cook food — round, spicy beancakes, or pieces of meat on a stick — to sell to hungry passersby. Sometimes they join together in market women's organizations, to decide together what prices to charge and to lend each other small amounts of money.

All over Africa women work very, very hard. They do more than their share

of the farm work, and as well are expected to get the water and firewood, and do all of the cooking and housework. Although some husbands in Africa help their wives, most think these things are "women's work," so they will not help. Usually, the only help Nigerian women get is from their children, who often help carry wood and water, and work in the fields with their mothers.



A Girl in Northern Nigeria

Hadisa

The sound of the rooster: time to wake up! Hadisa rubs her eyes. Hadisa is twelve years old, but she works as hard as an adult. Hadisa lives with her father and mother, her father's two other wives, and her fourteen brothers and sisters, in a village outside Kano. With all those people, there's a lot of work to do, even when you're just twelve years old!

Hadisa sighs as she picks up a large bucket from the courtyard. Today is Saturday, so there is no school, but there is still not much time for play! She runs to catch up with her mother and two of her younger sisters as they leave the walled compound. Because the pump in their village has broken down, they must walk four kilometers to the next village to collect all the water they will need for the day. "When will they fix the pump?" Hadisa asks her mother angrily. There is so much work — pounding, cooking, gathering wood, weeding and hoeing in the fields — without having to walk extra kilometers for water! Hadisa's mother laughs. "We have only had this pump for two years, and already we are so accustomed to it we don't know what to do when it breaks! Hurry now, for we must get the water boiled

and the porridge made for your father when he gets back from the fields for breakfast. And then there's the meeting."

Everyone in the village has been talking about the meeting for days. The head man called the meeting, to be held — like most of their village meetings — under the big baobab tree in the village centre. But this meeting is different from most. As well as all the men, the head man wants to see the women, too.

The benches are crowded when the four women of Hadisa's compound arrive. Hadisa really should be back in the compound organizing the younger children to sweep the courtyard, but her mother and the others relented and let her come, because she is almost a woman, and is almost through primary school. "Sanu!" they greet their neighbours. "Ina gajiya?" (How is the tiredness?) "Ba gajia." (There is no tiredness.) Finally the head man begins to speak. The Kano



Many Nigerian girls spend hours every day carrying water from long distances.

State Government, he explains, is working on a special program to repair and maintain village pumps. "As you know," he says, "there are so many people using the pump that it frequently breaks down and needs repair. So the government has told us that we are to select someone from the village to learn to maintain it." The men nod in agreement. "Toe!" they muttered softly. "Madel!" (That's good.) Hadisa can see her father sitting amongst them.

Then the head man stops and stares for a long time at the ground. Finally, he lifts his head. "The government says that, since it is the women who use the pump and carry the water, this person is to be a woman." There is silence. Hadisa looks sideways at her mother. She is smiling, a very tiny smile. The men begin to talk amongst themselves. The loose sleeves of their rigas flap as they wave their arms. The rumble of their talk grows louder. Mallam Siddu quickly stands up. "This is impossible!" he says. "How could a woman do this? What woman would go to the city and learn all these difficult mechanical things? It should be a man!"

"It can't be a man." The head man shakes his head slowly. "The government is working with an aid agency from Europe, and they will only give money for a woman to learn." There is more talk from the men, then Mrs. Bukar stands, slowly pulling her small, old body up by her walking stick. Everyone falls silent, for Mrs. Bukar is very wise. "Things are changing," says Mrs. Bukar. "I have never been to the city, because it was thought that women should stay at home. But it is very true that the women should understand the pump. They are the ones who use the pump. They are the ones who suffer when the pump breaks down. And it is not true that a woman can't learn these things. Mrs. Umaru has never been to school, but she has organized the women and helped them raise chickens and get the eggs to the market. She would be a good person to go to the city to learn about the pump." As Mrs. Bukar sits, everyone looks at Hadisa's mother. It is true, thinks Hadisa. Her mother is smart. She is a good organizer. She has never been to school herself, but she makes sure that her daughters go to primary school every day.

"Mrs. Umaru, will you learn about the pump?" asks the head man.

In the evening, the family sits in the courtyard together and talks. Things will be a bit different now. The other wives in the family must help more with the work. Hadisa will have to help more, too. Mrs. Umaru, a woman who has never been more than 20 kilometers from her village, must get on the bus and go to the city of Kano, must spend two weeks away from her family, learning about the pumps and how to fix them, and must return with her kit full of spare parts and diagrams and keep the village pump running. Hadisa feels tight with pride. If women can learn such things, what is to stop them from doing all sorts of other things? If her mother can go to Kano to learn about the pump, why can't she — Hadisa — go to Kano to secondary school? As Hadisa stares into the dim light she doesn't see the faces of her family. Hadisa sees instead a whole new world of possibility.

Population

How Does Nigeria Rate?

Population: Comparing Countries

	Population 1990 (millions)	Annual Increase (%)	Total Fertility Rate	Projected 2020	Doubling (yrs.)
Africa	661.0	2.9	6.2	1481.0	24
Egypt	54.7	2.9	4.7	101.9	24
Nigeria	118.8	2.9	6.5	273.2	24
Kenya	24.6	3.8	6.7	60.5	18
Mexico	88.6	2.4	3.8	142.1	29
Canada	26.6	.7	1.7	33.1	96
United States	251.4	.8	2.0	294.4	92

1990 World Population Data Sheet, Population Reference Bureau, Inc.

Let's look at the figures in this table and make sure we understand what they mean.

- **Population 1990:** These are the latest population figures for these regions. Which country has the biggest population? Which countries are about the same size in population?
- **Annual Increase (%):** This tells us how fast countries are increasing in population. Which country is increasing fastest? Which has the lowest annual increase rate? How does the population increase in Nigeria compare to that of Africa as a whole? To Canada?
- **Total Fertility Rate:** This tells us the average number of children per woman.
- **Projected 2020:** In the year 2020, these are the populations (in millions) we can expect to see in these countries, unless things change. What problems will the large populations in African countries bring?
- **Doubling:** This tells us how long it will take the populations to double. Which country has the shortest doubling time? the longest?

By looking at this table, you can see there is a lot of difference between the size of families in different parts of the world. In North America some people are worried that people aren't having enough children, and that in future years there won't be enough young people to take care of all the old people. In North America, about 21 percent of the people are under 15, and 13 percent are over 64. In Nigeria, 45 percent of the people are under 15, and only 2 percent are over 64. Can you think of some reasons why parents in Canada may decide to have fewer children than parents in Nigeria? Can you think of some advantages and disadvantages of being a "youthful nation?"

Population

— How Many is Too Many? —

In Nigeria eleven babies are born every minute. Every year the population of Nigeria expands by 2.9 percent. If you get out your calculator and figure out what this means, you'll find that in twenty-four years the population of Nigeria will double. Can you think of some of the problems which all those extra people will bring?

A lot of Nigerians aren't worried. A recent survey of Nigerians showed that only 40 percent of Nigerians think Nigeria has too many people. Forty percent think Nigeria has just enough people, and 12.4 percent think Nigeria doesn't have enough people. Most Nigerians think the ideal number of children per family is 4 to 6. For many Nigerians who are farmers, children are very important to help the family work in the fields and raise more food. In a country where there are no senior citizens' pensions, having lots of children is an important way of making sure you are taken care of in your old age. Also, in countries where a lot of children die from diseases, families have a lot of children to make sure some of them survive. What's the answer? Social scientists tell us that if a country can improve its health and education, often families decide to have fewer children. How do you think this can be explained?

The government of Nigeria is worried. They are afraid there won't be enough land to feed all the people if the population keeps growing rapidly. In 1989, the government began the National Population Policy. They are hoping they can encourage women to marry at a later age, and to have a maximum of four children. But in Nigeria, where children are considered "gifts of God," reducing the population growth won't be easy.

— Activities —

POINTS OF VIEW • Being a Nomad



You may have gone on a camping trip, where you put up a tent each night and cooked over a fire. Imagine what it would be like to spend your whole life camping. That's what the nomadic people of Africa — the Fulani and Tuareg people of West Africa, the Masai of East Africa, the Borana people of Ethiopia — do.

These people are in a period of change, where it is getting harder to herd their animals because more pasture is being farmed, and where governments are urging them to send their children to school.

Imagine that Rikku (pages 46 to 47) has invited you to visit his family for a month. What things would you miss? enjoy? like? not like? Write a letter home from Nigeria, telling your friends what it's like being a North American driving the cattle with a nomadic family.

• Women in a Changing World

Read the story about Hadisa (pages 55 to 56). Think about some of the things behind this story:

- ★ Why did the aid agency decide that a woman had to be the one to learn to maintain the pump? Since the aid agency must have known that in Nigeria men usually do the mechanical jobs, do you think they were right or wrong to insist that the maintenance person must be a woman?
- ★ How do you think the men felt about the idea that a woman should be the maintenance person? How do you think the head man felt? Do you think the men might feel angry that their customs had been ignored?

Now, write this story from the point of view of the head man. Make sure you include these things:

- ★ The government representative comes to talk to you, and tells you there must be a woman maintenance person. This is a very strange idea to you, and you may want to argue.
- ★ You call a village meeting to discuss the idea. You can see that many of the men of the village are upset by the new idea.
- ★ You try to smooth things down as well as you can, but you're still a little worried. Where will it lead, when women start leaving their homes and doing "men's work?"

HANDS ON

Check your community. There may be someone from Nigeria who could attend in their traditional clothes and talk to you about life in Nigeria.

- **A Nigerian Feast**

Prepare and serve a Nigerian lunch using the recipes on page 51 or other Nigerian recipes. You might want to wear clothes that resemble Nigerian dress. Girls could use a length of cloth, or a sheet folded in half and wrapped around them to be a wrapper, and wear a light cotton blouse on top. Boys might wear simple cotton pants and shirts.

LET'S DISCUSS

- **Families in Nigeria and North America**

In North America, we tend to live in **nuclear families** — families with parents and children. In Nigeria, people are more likely to live in **extended families** with aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents. What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of each?

- **Population Table Talk**

Look over the population table and the information and questions underneath, on page 57. Discuss the questions either with your whole class or with a group.

MEDIA REPORT

- **"Nigeria: The Land and its People"**

Divide into groups of four, each to be a television team. Your task: to host a TV travel special on Nigeria. Go back to the unit on Land and Climate (starting on page 1) and review the different areas of climate and vegetation. Then look at pages 37 to 47, which tell about the peoples of Nigeria. Now, try to put it all together. Each one of your teams should take one of Nigeria's major ethnic groups, and write a script with interesting information about the people and the type of country they live in. You may even want to include in your script an interview with some of the people, and to ask some of your team-mates to act the parts.

LET'S FIND OUT

- **Pithy Proverbs**

Africans are famous for their proverbs — wise sayings that have been passed down for hundreds of years. Two African proverbs are quoted on page 48. See if you can find some more African proverbs by looking through books on Africa and on proverbs. You could create an interesting bulletin board by printing out the African proverbs you collect.



RELIGION and CULTURE

Although they follow different religions, almost all Nigerians believe in God. They call God by a number of different names: Allah, God, Ororun, or Chukwu.

- *Why do many Nigerians have an African name and a name from the Bible?*
- *Where does most popular North American music come from?*

Islam

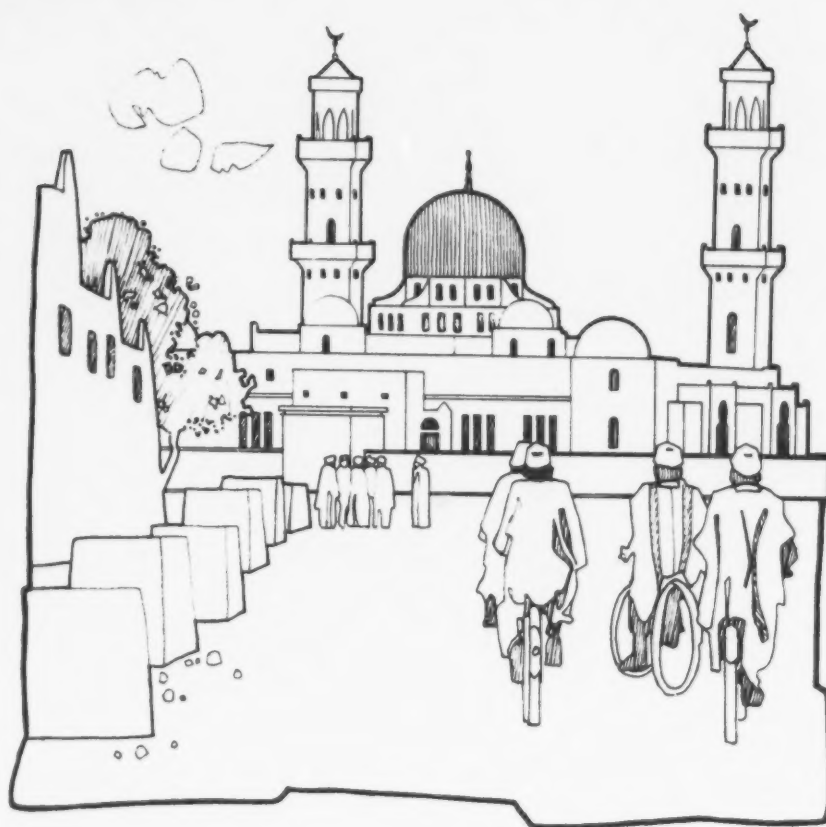
—The Way of the Prophet —

About 47 percent of Nigerians are Muslim, followers of the prophet Mohammed. Mohammed lived in the 7th century AD in what is now Saudi Arabia. **Islam** (another word for Mohammedanism) was brought to northern Nigeria by Arab traders. If you were a Muslim Nigerian you might spend an hour or so, before or after regular school, with a koranic teacher who would teach you to read and write Arabic script and to study the **Koran** (sometimes spelled Qur'an), the sacred teachings of Mohammed. Five times a day you would face Mecca to pray. If you were a boy, you would go with your father to the mosque on Friday afternoon, which is the holy day for Muslims. Women and girls pray at home. During your lifetime you would try to make at least one pilgrimage — or *hajj* — to Mecca. If you did make this trip, you would have the right to put the title *alhaji* (*hajiya* or *alhaja* for women) before your name, and other people would respect you for it.

A Muslim man may marry up to four wives. But it is getting more and more difficult for Nigerian men to provide for more than one wife and to pay for the education of a large family. Many are choosing to have only one wife.

If you were a Muslim girl, you would be faced with **purdah** once you reached your teens. You would be expected to be a good wife and mother, and to stay at home away from the eyes of others.

The great mosque at Kano. On Fridays Muslim men and boys go here to pray.



Christianity

— The Spirit of the West —

The first Christian missionaries arrived in Benin in 1515. They were few, and had little effect. In the 1800s, missionaries — both Protestant and Catholic — arrived in large numbers. They set up western hospitals and schools. Many Nigerian parents sent their children to the Christian schools because they wanted them to have a western education. Along with reading and arithmetic, the children were taught about Christianity. Many of the missionaries believed that African customs were the work of the devil, and they worked to stamp out the traditional artwork and ceremonies.

Today, about 35 percent of Nigerians are Christians, most living in the south of Nigeria. They — like the Muslims — take their religion very seriously. When they are baptized into the Christian religion, many Africans take a Christian name. So many Nigerian Christians have two names: their African name — Orkurga, Shehu, or Idoma — plus a name from the Bible which is their Christian name — Abraham, Joshua, or Grace.

Traditional Religions

— A World of Spirits

The other 23 percent of Nigerians believe in traditional African religions. The followers of traditional religions believe in one supreme god, just as Muslims and Christians do. The Yoruba worship the traditional god *Ororun*, and the Ibo worship

Chukwu. There are less important gods too, and spirits which inhabit the trees, land and animals. Each family or person may have a special god to protect and help them.

Most of the traditional religions believe that after people die their spirits still live on in the community. Some villages perform masquerades — dances which involve the wearing of carved wooden or bronze masks and costumes which have been passed down for many years. On important occasions, when people appear in the masks and costumes, it seems to the villagers that the spirits of their ancestors are with them. The secrets of the masks and the dances are kept by secret societies of men, and passed down from one generation to the next.

For many Nigerians, giving up their traditional beliefs and becoming Muslims or Christians is very difficult. Even when they do accept a new religion, they often continue to feel the power of the old religion.



A carved masquerade figure from a Yoruba village

Getting Along Together

— An Uneasy Peace

It's not always very easy for people of different religions to get along together. In 1986 President Babangida — who is himself a Muslim — announced that Nigeria would join the Organization of the Islamic Conference. The Christians of the south protested. They were afraid Nigeria was becoming more Muslim. In 1987 young Muslims and Christians in northern Nigeria started to fight with each other. Many Christian churches and some Muslim mosques were burned and at least seventeen people were killed. Many people — both Christians and Muslims — rioted, and some were put in jail.

On April 22, 1990 there was a coup attempt. A group of army officers attempted to overthrow the government of President Babangida. They didn't succeed. Many people were arrested, most of them Christians. It was suspected that the people trying to get rid of the government were Christians who felt the Muslims had too much power. Shortly afterward, the president of the Christian Association of Nigeria, Archbishop Obubunmi Okogie, asked the government to create a better balance of power by appointing more Christians to the cabinet (the government committee which makes most of the decisions). The government refused.

Although Christians and Muslims live together in peace, there is always some uneasy tension. In religion, as with customs and history, Nigerians have to work hard to overcome the differences between them.

Usable Art

— Nigeria's Craftspeople

In Nigeria you don't need to spend money for pictures because art is all around you in the everyday things that people use.

If you go to the market to buy some cloth, you might choose some traditional tie-dye or batik cloth, or you might buy some handwoven cloth, with bands of bright colours alternating with black. At the market, you will pass women carrying calabashes (gourds) which are beautifully carved and painted in traditional



Dying cloth at the Kano dye vats



The calabash carvers at Oyo are famous throughout Nigeria for their fine, detailed work.

designs. You might stop to look at grass mats woven in designs of black, brown and tan. Look! There's someone selling little stools, perfect for sitting on in the market, with a design of squares and circles burned into the wood. And over there is a Hausa trader with leather bags in different colours, each with a design from the northern city of Sokoto.

In the past twenty or thirty

years, western factory-made products have become popular. Plastic or tin buckets are replacing calabashes, cheaper machine-made cloth replacing the hand-dyed cloth. But handmade work, using beautiful traditional designs, is still found in many Nigerian homes.

Religious Art

— Carving for the Gods —

Generation after generation of Nigerians have been master carvers or sculptors, creating masks and religious figures for traditional ceremonies. Today masks are still carved for the masquerades, but carvers also create other works which are sold to art collectors and tourists. Read on to find out what Nigeria's most famous novelist, Chinua Achebe, has written about a religious and artistic tradition he remembers from when he was a young Ibo boy.

Mbari

Mbari, a tradition of the Ibo people, was a celebration through art of the world and of the life lived in it. It was performed by the community on command by the Earth goddess, Ana.

Once every so often, this goddess would instruct the community to build a home of images in her honour. The diviner [the person who was in contact with Ana] would travel through the village and knock on the doors of those chosen by Ana for her work. These chosen people were then blessed and separated from the community. They moved into the forest and, behind a high fence and under the instruction and supervision of master artists and craftsmen, they constructed a temple of art.

It was a simple structure, a stage formed by three high walls supporting a peaked roof, but in place of a flat floor you had a deck of steps running from one side wall to the other and rising almost to the roof at the back wall. This auditorium was then filled to the brim with sculptures in moulded earth and clay, and the walls with murals in white, black, yellow and green. The sculptures were arranged carefully on the steps. At the centre of the front row sat the earth goddess herself, a child on her left knee and a sword in her right hand. She is mother and judge.

To her right and left, other deities took their places. Human figures, animals (perhaps a leopard dragging along the carcass of a goat), figures from folklore, history, or pure imagination, forest scenes of village and domestic life, everyday events — everything jostled together for space.

When all was ready, after months or even years of preparation, the makers of mbari, who had been working in complete seclusion, sent word to the larger community. A day was chosen for the the unveiling, and there was dancing and feasting in front of the house of mbari.

— Chinua Achebe, February 1990 (excerpted from *West Africa*)

A carved wooden mask of the Ibibio people who live in Southeastern Nigeria



Music

— From Traditional to Juju —

"... if I start changing my music for this other part of the world, it means I am not playing my music no more. I have to stick to my music because back home everybody loves it and that is what is important to me."

— King Sunny Adé, Nigerian musician, following his successful performance in New York

The idea of a "concert," for which the musician must practice, and the audience must sit, has no meaning for the traditional Nigerian musician. Music in Nigeria is part of everyday life, part of religious and social activities. Events such as marriage, child-naming, burial, house-warming, the installation of new chiefs and harvesting are often celebrated with music. And where there is music there is almost always dance. From the time they are little babies, tied to the backs of their mothers as they dance, Nigerians learn to dance creatively to complex African rhythms.



Playing the talking drum. Note the markings on the man's cheeks. These designs — cut into the skin to show what ethnic group the person belongs to — are much less common now than they were 30 years ago.

There are a lot of traditional Nigerian instruments — many different kinds of drums, horns, plucked and bowed instruments, and xylophones. Western Nigeria is the home of the legendary "talking" drum. The master of the talking drum can change the tone of the drum by pressing the strings which tighten the membranes on either end of the drum. By carefully choosing how much to press, and where to strike his stick, the drummer can make the drum "talk," so that another trained person can translate the message into words.

But all Nigerian music isn't traditional. There is also a great variety of popular music. Much of our popular music — jazz, rock, reggae — comes from African music, brought to the Americas when Africans were shipped to the New World as slaves. Some examples of modern African music can be heard on recordings by Savuka, Miriam Makeba, or Paul Simon, whose Afro-American Graceland album captures much of the feel of what the Africans call "highlife" music.

Nigeria has many well-known musicians. **Fela Anikulapo Kuti** combines an African highlife sound, big band jazz, and traditional instruments. Fela has been imprisoned several times for the words of his popular songs, which criticize the government, big business and corruption. **King Sunny Adé** has travelled through Europe, North America and Japan with his 52-member band, the African Beats. They play **juju music**, which grew from *apala* — Yoruba traditional religious music. The *apala* music originally had just a singer and drums. Gradually, Sunny Adé added other instruments: guitars, keyboards, synthesizers, and many different drums, including the talking drum.

Literature

—Nigeria: Land of Writers

Nigeria seems to have as many writers as the rest of Africa combined. Chinua Achebe, Amos Tutuola, Flora Nwapa, Cyprian Ekwensi, Buchi Emecheta and Wole Soyinka are the most famous. All of them write about their experiences as Nigerians, drawing from the traditions of the past and showing the difficulties of moving from a traditional way of life to a more western, modern way of life.



Wole Soyinka

In 1986 Wole Soyinka was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature — only the fifth time the prize has been awarded to a person from the Third World. Soyinka has written over twenty plays, four volumes of poetry and two novels. His plays, which combine Yoruba tradition with western subject matter, have been performed in New York City and London.

— Activities —

POINT OF VIEW



"... if I start changing my music for this other part of the world, it means I am not playing my music no more. I have to stick to my music because back home everybody loves it and that is what is important to me."

— King Sunny Adé

way Nigerian children are brought up that might make music and beautiful crafts important to them?

- Could North Americans learn something about art and music from Nigerians?

HANDS ON



- **Create a Nigerian Fabric**

Tie Die and Batik are ways of decorating cloth which are very popular in Nigeria. Get a book out of the library which shows you how to do these crafts, bring a piece of cloth or a T-shirt to school, and get creative!

- **Organize a Nigerian Sock Hop**

If you are lucky, there might be someone in your community who has a recording of King Sunny Adé or Fela

Anikulapo Kuti (try your library). If not, there is sure to be some African-type music around: Paul Simon's album *Graceland*, or any album by Johnny Clegg and Savuka, Miriam Makeba, Malathini and Mahotella Queens, Prince Nico, or Ladysmith Black Mambazo. You might decorate the room with paintings of the different climatic areas of Nigeria. Wear your tie-die outfits, and have a good time!

LET'S DISCUSS



- **Religion: A Dividing Line**

Ever since Nigeria became independent, there have been tensions between the Muslims (mainly in the north) and the Christians in the south. Christians fear discrimination, because they are a minority in Nigeria.

This kind of problem doesn't happen only in Nigeria.

Think about some of the other areas of the world where there is religious conflict. (Some ideas might be Ireland, the Middle East, Sudan.) Do you have any ideas about how religious tolerance can be encouraged in areas where there is more than one major religion? If you were in the Nigerian government, what are some of the things you might try to do to bring about religious harmony?

MEDIA REPORT

- **Market Art**

You are a radio reporter describing to a North American audience the different crafts you see as you go through a market in Nigeria. Because the audience can't see you, you'll have to be careful to describe each thing you see.

LET'S FIND OUT

- **Finding out About Islam**

Find out all you can about the Muslim religion. What are the beliefs of a Muslim person? What are the Muslim festivals? In what ways is Islam related to Christianity? (You may be surprised to find out that Jesus is in the Koran.) When you've finished gathering the information, you may want to use it in one of these ways:

- ★ make up a multiple-choice questionnaire, to quiz your classmates on how much they know about

Islam. (You'll also want to make a key with the right answers, so they can check their questionnaires for accuracy.)

- ★ write a report
- ★ write a dialogue about a Christian and a Muslim talking. You may want to get a friend to help you act this out.



RURAL LIFE

Nigeria's "exploding cities" attract more and more people from the country. But two-thirds of Nigerians still live in the country and work their farms under very difficult conditions.

- *Why don't most Nigerian farmers use horses, oxen, or tractors?*
- *What does Canadian wheat have to do with Nigerian farmers?*

The Town and the Country

Two Different Worlds

Two-thirds of Nigeria's people live in **rural areas** (in the countryside) and make their living from farming. Life in the small farming villages of Nigeria is certainly not easy. Most people living in Nigerian cities can walk to a neighbourhood tap and get clean water. But in the country, only 20 percent of the people have a source of safe, clean water. Seventy-five percent of city-dwellers are able to go to a hospital or clinic if they get sick, but only 40 percent of country-dwellers have nurses or doctors to help them get well. The result? Many people living in rural areas die young. They die of diseases carried by dirty water: typhoid, cholera, dysentery and polio. They die because there is no one to help them when they get sick.

Education is very important to most Nigerians. But, although there is usually an elementary school for country children to go to, secondary schools are generally built in cities and rural children must go to a boarding school if they want to go on.

Despite all these problems, Nigerian farming families continue to work hard to raise food in difficult conditions.

Farming in Nigeria

Nigeria has many large-scale projects where farming is done with tractors and other mechanized equipment. However, the average Nigerian farmer is someone who farms a small area of land and uses a simple hand-hoe.

In Europe, farmers long ago learned to use animals — horses and oxen — to help them farm. Why didn't that happen in Nigeria? Well, Nigeria, like many African countries, is cursed with a little fly, just a little bit bigger than the common housefly, called the *tsetse* fly. The *tsetse* fly feeds itself by sucking the blood of animals, and when it sucks the blood of horses or cattle it can infect them with trypanosomiasis, a fatal disease sometimes called sleeping sickness. So all those helpful animals like horses and oxen are able to live only in the northern part of Nigeria which is *tsetse*-free. Oxen are sometimes used for ploughing in the North. Tractors are too expensive for most farmers to buy. They can sometimes be hired from the government, but there aren't enough to go around during the short planting season. So the main "beasts of burden" in Nigeria are the people.

Traditional Farming

Generations of Experience

The main form of agriculture, which Africans have used for hundreds of years, is *shifting cultivation*. Farmers clear an area of bush or forest and burn the debris. They grow crops for one to three years, using up the nitrogen in the soil. When the field stops producing good yields, the farmers leave it and move on to another patch. The first patch is left *fallow*. It becomes overgrown by grasses and other wild plants which restore the nitrogen and other nutrients, and in another few years it



(CIDA Photo: Bruce Paton)

is ready once more to be farmed. Shifting cultivation is a good, cheap way to farm without expensive fertilizers. All it needs to work well is time; the land must not be cultivated until it has its nitrogen back.

But here's the problem: the land left fallow is getting less and less as population grows, and as more land is used for export crops. For shifting agriculture to work properly, about 70 percent of the land should lie fallow at any one time. In Nigeria, along with other densely populated areas like Kenya and Uganda, only 20 to 30 percent lies fallow. What happens when people replant an area before it is ready? The soil becomes exhausted and erosion occurs.

Another farming method which Nigerian farmers have used for centuries is multi-cropping. Instead of planting whole fields in one crop as North American farmers do, Nigerian farmers plant several crops together. In south-eastern Nigeria, farmers grow all of these things in one plot: tall trees like coconut and oil palms; medium-sized trees like breadfruit; short trees like kola, mango and orange; shorter trees like bananas and plantains; shoulder-height crops like cassava and pepper bushes; ground crops like peanuts and vegetables. When agricultural experts from Europe or North America came to Nigeria, they often told the farmers to change this "messy" way of farming, plough up the fields, and plant straight rows of a single crop. Which just shows that a European "expert" isn't always an expert in Africa. The African multi-cropping method helps to shade delicate plants from the fierce sun. It keeps the ground covered all over, so the soil won't erode. It makes good use of all the space. And it makes sure that the family will have food of some kind growing all year 'round.

Feeding the Nation

— Looking for New Ways of Farming —

Traditional African farmers are very skilled people but they face a problem. Shifting cultivation can't keep on working because there isn't enough land. What do you think should be done?

Tractors... machines... bags of fertilizer... irrigation projects.... is that what I hear you saying? Twenty years ago, we used to think that was the answer. If only Nigerians had enough tractors and enough big dams to provide irrigation, and enough fertilizer, their problems would be over. But those answers didn't turn out to be very good ones for Nigeria. For one thing, when you plough up the dry Nigerian soil with tractors some of the soil blows away in the wind. For another, most Nigerian farmers are too poor to buy tractors or gas or fertilizer. Nigeria has spent millions of dollars building several huge dams and irrigation projects, but they are very expensive and Nigeria is no longer the rich country it once was.

Nigeria, like most African countries, needs new ways of farming that improve



(CIDA Photo: Bruce Paton)

Are tractors the answer for Nigerian farmers? Perhaps sometimes, but there may be other, more appropriate ways to improve farming in Nigeria.

on the traditional methods, and which are cheap and simple to use. Nigerian farmers need **appropriate technology** — simple types of pumps and ploughs and stoves and other things that improve life for people and are easy to use and cheap to operate. They need farming methods that help farmers grow better crops. And they need improved seeds that can grow in dry and difficult conditions.

— IITA: Science for the Farmer —

If you were to go to the outskirts of Ibadan, you might see the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA). Inside is a group of agricultural researchers — scientists who work on developing new ways of farming and new kinds of seeds. Here are some of the methods — not so much “new” as “improved,” because they are often based on traditional methods — which they have developed:

- **no-plough farming:** In order to plant you have to plough, right? Wrong! IITA researchers have found that when you plough the soil in most of the wetter parts of Africa, you speed up erosion. They’ve developed a way of spraying to kill weeds, then poking holes in the unploughed soil for planting. Crops are increased by over 100%.
- **alley cropping:** Remember those farmers who planted trees, bushes, and ground crops together? Alley cropping uses this idea by planting rows of trees

with crops between. The farmer gets wood, cuttings for the goats to eat, and shade for the crops. Special trees which increase the nitrogen in the soil can be planted. The result: crops 60 to 100 percent bigger than before.

IITA is also famous for its improved seeds. Take the humble cowpea. Cowpeas (black-eyed peas) are a crop that will grow with little rain and can tolerate dry periods in the growing season. Their low-spreading leaves protect the soil against erosion and help to conserve water. They enrich the soil with nitrogen. "The perfect crop!" you say. Yes, except for one thing: the cowpea is easily overrun with disease and pests. IITA began to work on pest- and disease-resistant cowpeas. In 1983 a new improved cowpea was tried in Kano State, northern Nigeria. The farmers who grew it got crops more than three times bigger than usual. It proved so popular that all supplies sold out! The improved cowpea now grows in much of northern Nigeria. IITA went on to develop improved varieties of cassava and maize.

Irrigation

— Helping the Rains Along —

One of the main problems for Nigerian farmers is that the rain often doesn't come at the right time for the crops. The answer in some areas is irrigation. Nigerian farmers living near rivers have irrigated their fields for longer than anyone can remember. They use a *shadoof*— a large calabash or bucket which is tied to a rope. The rope is tied to the end of a long pole which is balanced, rather like a teeter-totter, on a pivot, and has a stone counter-weight on the other end. The farmer lowers the calabash into the water, then leans on the end of the pole to raise up the calabash. The full calabash is tipped into an irrigation channel which is sloped to carry the water to the thirsty plants. By irrigating, the farmer can grow more than one crop during the year and get double use out of the land.

The shadoof works well, but it's slow and it's only good for land which is right beside the river or next to a well. In Northern Nigeria, the state of Kano is helping its farmers to irrigate their land more effectively. The Kano Agricultural Development Project helps farmers to build inexpensive wells and to buy small Honda pumps, which can irrigate 15 times the area that a shadoof can cover. The motorcycle mechanics of Kano State have been trained to fix the pumps if they break down.

Hussaini Chiroma is a Hausa farmer, living in Kano State. "I used to kill myself all day with the shadoof, and even then I could water only a quarter acre [0.1 hectare]," he said. In 1984 Hussaini Chiroma bought a diesel pump for \$700 and irrigated one hectare. In the dry season he grew wheat, peppers, onions, tomatoes and sugar cane worth \$4,000, plus half a ton of maize in the rainy season. The river

he draws water from dries up in April and May each year, and Hussaini next plans to request a shallow well so he won't have to rely on the river. But \$700 is a lot for a farmer to pay. Can you think of a way the government could help farmers to get the money? For one idea, read *Getting Credit*, page 78.

Supporting the Farmers

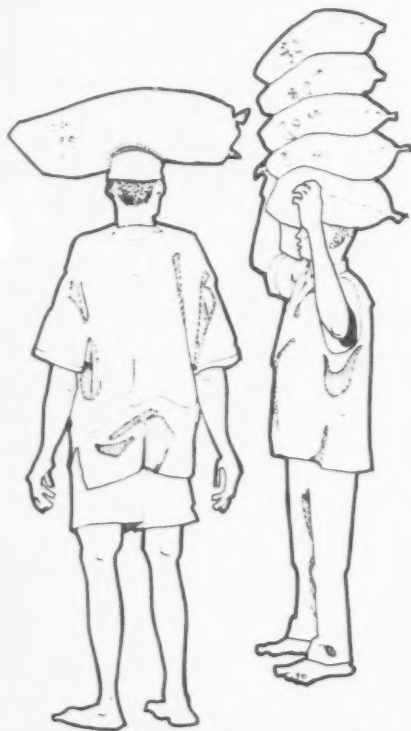
— Cut the Wheat; Please Pass the Sorghum! —

In North America, when we think "grain," we think "wheat." It's true that there are other grains: oats, barley, rye, but wheat is a **staple food** for most Canadians and Americans. We eat it every day when we open our lunch bags and bite into a sandwich. For many of the world's people, wheat is not a staple food. Wheat grows well only in certain climates and soils. For people living in Nigeria in the mid-1900s, the staple food was sorghum, or cassava (which grows well in dry, poor soil), maize (corn), yams, or rice. But farmers in Canada and the United States were growing lots and lots of wheat — more than North Americans could use — and they needed people to buy it. One of the ways to encourage Africans to buy wheat was to send them free wheat as food aid, or to sell them wheat at very cheap

prices to start with. Then Africans would start to like the taste of wheat and ask their governments to buy it. This is what happened in Nigeria. People enjoyed the taste of wheat bread, and began to eat more of it.

Most parts of Nigeria aren't suitable for wheat-growing, so the government had to buy the wheat from North America. The Nigerian farmers took their sorghum and maize to market and found that nobody would buy from them. Who would buy sorghum when they could buy wheat? The only way the farmers could sell their crops was to lower their prices. The farmers got poorer and poorer, and many of them gave up and headed for the city, looking for jobs.

Then the price of oil went down. Nigeria had a big debt, and didn't want to make it worse by buying



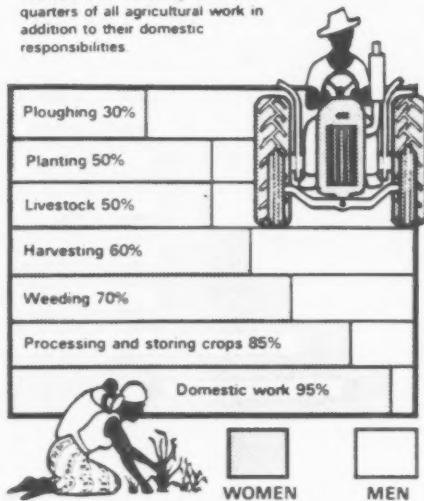
**Bags of wheat from North America:
Does this really help the Nigerian
farmers?**

wheat. In 1987, President Babangida made a decision. "Nigeria won't import any more wheat!" he said. The bakers were horrified! But then they remembered that they could still make bread; they'd just have to make it from sorghum or maize flour. They encouraged the farmers to start growing these crops again.

Nigeria's Women Farmers — **The Invisible Workforce**

DIVISION OF LABOUR

Women in Africa do up to three quarters of all agricultural work in addition to their domestic responsibilities.



Often when we think of the word "farmer" we think of a man. But many of the farmers of Africa and in other parts of the world are women. In Nigeria, many of the women work long, hard days in the fields growing crops for their families. Yet when there is help from the government or aid organizations, it usually goes to the men farmers.

In the last few years, African governments and overseas aid groups have suddenly begun to realize that the women farmers are very important, and that they need support in their work. Can you think of some ways the Nigerian government might help the women farmers?



(CIDA Photo: Bruce Paton)

Getting Credit

— The People's Bank —

Supposing you were a farmer who wanted to get ahead. You might need to buy a pump. You might want to buy some chickens and start to sell eggs. Until recently, there was no way a poor Nigerian could get any money to get started. Then in 1989 the Nigerian government began the Nigerian People's Bank, which has branches in many of Nigeria's 21 states. Nigerians can borrow small amounts of money from this bank, to help them get started in farming or business projects.

At first, many Nigerians thought this idea wouldn't work. "These people are so poor they will take the money and spend it and you'll never get it back!" complained many of the richer Nigerians. But they were wrong. So far, the bank

**"Poor people are more
honest than the rich."**

has an excellent record of repayment. Bola Ajibola, Nigeria's Minister of Justice, says, "Poor people are more honest than the rich."

In order to get a loan, the person must belong to a group of 15 people. Only one of the members can get a loan at one time and if that person doesn't pay back the money, no one else in the group can get a loan. It seems to be working! The bank now plans to build 170 new branches.

— Activities —

POINTS OF VIEW



• Down on the Farm

You are a Nigerian farmer. You hear the Nigerian government say they support small farmers, but on the other hand, it sometimes seems to you they don't understand what it's really like to be a farmer.

Write a letter to the Minister of Agriculture, saying what you think needs to be done to encourage people to stay on their farms and grow food.

HANDS ON



• Farmers Acting Up

The Great Aid Scheme

The people of Twara, a small village in northern Nigeria, are surprised to see a tractor drive up to their village. A man jumps off the tractor. "I represent a famous aid organization," he explains, "and I'm here to give you this tractor. It's going to have a wonderful effect on your lives!"

The villagers look at each other. They don't react with the joy that the aid man expected. "We'll have a meeting," they say. "We'll have to talk about this."

At the meeting, many things are discussed:

- ★ Who would get to use the tractor?
- ★ Who would pay for the gasoline to run the tractor?
- ★ Who would fix the tractor if it broke down?
- ★ What would the tractor do to the dry northern land?
- ★ Many of the fields are small, and some aren't flat. How will the tractor work on these fields?
- ★ Tractors can do ploughing, but not weeding. Often it is the women who have the job of weeding. How will the tractor affect the workload of the women of the village?

In a small group, make up a skit about the aid organization man and the villagers. Show their discussion, and the decision they make.

LET'S DISCUSS

- Explain the **shifting cultivation** method of farming which has been used by Nigerian farmers for centuries. Why is this method no longer working well?
- Explain what **appropriate technology** is, and why it's important in Africa. Do you think appropriate technology might be a good idea in North America? Explain why or why not.

MEDIA REPORT

- **Cutting Out Wheat**

President Babangida has just made an important decision. He has decided to stop the importing of wheat into Nigeria. There are a lot of people affected by this decision:

- ★ the government, which is trying to get out of debt;
- ★ the large international grain companies, based in North America;
- ★ people in Nigeria, who enjoy eating bread made from wheat;
- ★ Nigerian farmers, who now have a better chance to sell their crops at good prices.

You are the reporter in the right spot at the right time. Tape-record a radio newscast report in which you explain the situation, and interview representatives of some of the groups which are affected.

LET'S FIND OUT

- **Farming in North America**

You may have farmers in your community or living nearby. See if you can make an appointment to visit a farm and discuss with the farmer some of the problems of Canadian or American farmers. Find out whether any of the problems of Nigerian farmers are similar to those of farmers at home.

You may want to find out about some of these things:

- ★ **Prices of crops:** Are the prices high enough to pay the farmer a good living?
- ★ **Competition from cheap imported food:** Do the farmers need protection from imported food?
- ★ **Cost of farm inputs:** Are the prices of fertilizers, gasoline, and animal feed going up?
- ★ **Erosion of soil:** Is this a problem in North America?
- ★ **Problems of getting credit:** Is it easy to get loans from the bank?



CITIES and TOWNS

Every year 6% of Nigeria's farmers leave the farm and head for city lights. But once they get there they may find the city lights aren't so bright.

- *Why do people keep flocking into Nigeria's "exploding cities"?*
- *What's it like in a Nigerian market?*

Lagos

— An Exploding City —

Squatter Blues

July 14, 1990, Lagos. The 500,000 people of Maroko, a Lagos slum, watch as the bulldozers move in and begin to push down their homes. Children cry as the ramshackle wooden houses splinter and buckle.

Located right next to the upper-class district of Victoria Island, Maroko is a collection of tiny, makeshift houses. For years, the people who lived here asked the government to provide some basic community needs: piped water, electricity, and sewage. The government's answer came on July 7, when the residents were given seven days' notice to leave their homes and move to another area. The people marched to the army barracks to protest, but were turned back by armed policemen.

For the families of Maroko, home wasn't much but at least it was home. Most of them were farmers who moved to Lagos to look for a better life in the city, and found that the only place to live was in a home-made house in the slums. Now, as they sadly gather their few belongings together, they feel they are setting out on a journey to nowhere.

(Information from *West Africa*, 30 July - 5 August, 1990)

Lagos, the second largest city in Africa (Cairo, in Egypt, is bigger), is built on four islands and bits of mainland in the mangrove swamp area of Nigeria. How big is Lagos? Estimates vary from 5 to 8 million. As well as being the capital city of Nigeria, Lagos is also Nigeria's major port and handles 70 percent of all of Nigeria's trade with other countries. Most of Nigeria's large factories and offices are in Lagos. Bridges between the islands are jammed with cars, taxis, motorbikes, bicycles and people walking.

If you stand in many parts of Lagos and look around, you might think you were in a large North American city, like Vancouver or Seattle. Tall, sleek office buildings, beautiful homes with green lawns, apartment buildings, luxury hotels with nightclubs and swimming pools, a sports stadium, a national museum, two modern universities: all these are part of Lagos. But if you leave the business section, go past the areas of wealthy homes and head towards the outskirts, you'll find another Lagos, where people crowd together in areas like Maroka.

Lagos is one of the world's "exploding cities" — cities which are growing very fast. In 1960 there were fewer than 500,000 people in Lagos; today there are about 5 million. Where are all these people coming from? Some of them are children who were born in Lagos, but more are graduates of secondary schools or universities, looking for jobs. Often these people have grown up in villages, but now want to experience city life.

In Nigeria, more and more people are deciding they would like to live in cities. In 1965, only 17 percent of Nigerians lived in cities, but by 1988, 34 percent of Nigerians lived in cities. (In North America about 75 percent of people live in cities.) Every year, over 6 percent of Nigeria's farmers leave the countryside and head for Lagos or one of the other cities or towns.

Lagos has many modern, attractive buildings. Here is the City Hall.

Photograph from Nigeria in Pictures, copyright 1988 by Lerner Publications Company, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.



What happens when all these people arrive? Often, the city can't keep up with them. There aren't enough houses, enough basic services such as water, electricity or sewage, or enough buses to get people to work. Often cities like Lagos don't want any more people to come, and they are afraid that if they provide water and electricity to slums like Maroka it will just encourage more farmers to move to Lagos. So people in slum houses live from day to day, never knowing when they will be forced to leave.

The government of Nigeria is trying to make Lagos a little less crowded by moving the capital to Abuja, in central Nigeria (see page 33). But even with government offices moving, Lagos continues to grow as every day more people head to Lagos to see what life in the city is like.

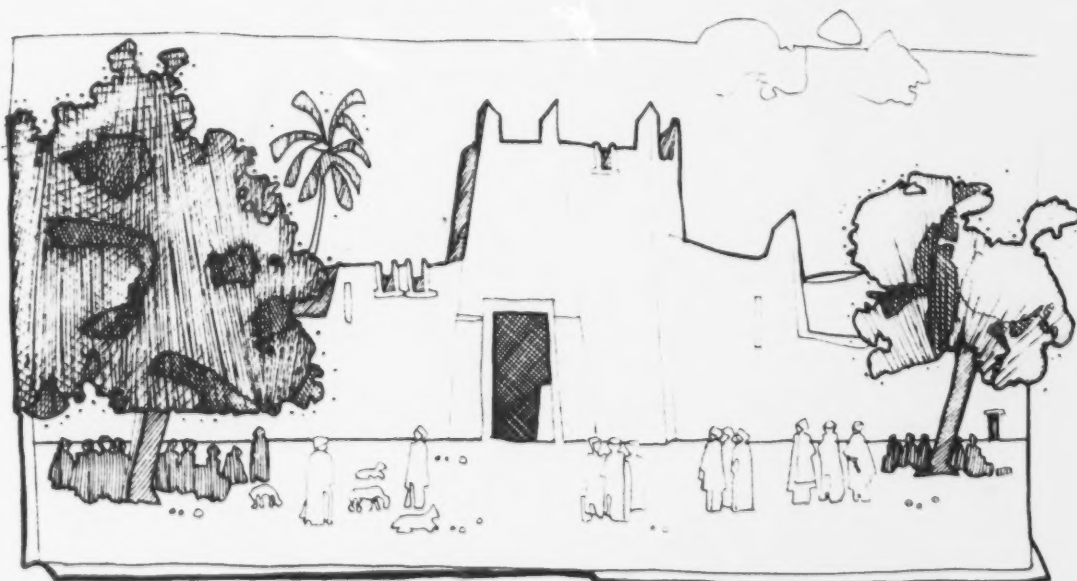
Nigerian Cities South and North

A Growing Concern

Lagos isn't the only large city in Nigeria. In 1960, Nigeria had only two cities of over 500,000 people: Lagos and Ibadan. Now there are at least nine.

Ibadan, only 135 km north of Lagos, is also a huge city of 4 to 5 million people. Ibadan is a Yoruba city, and some of the people who live there still go out every day to their farms. Ibadan is the home of the first Nigerian university. Like Lagos, Ibadan has many beautiful residential areas as well as increasingly large slums.

Nigeria's northern cities are very different from the cities of the south. Kano



A scene from the old walled city of Kano

is almost like two separate towns. The *Tsohon Gari* (old town) is about 1,000 years old. It is surrounded by a mud wall 20 km long, 12 meters wide, and 9 to 15 meters high, with fourteen gates. Walk through the narrow streets of the *Tsohon Gari*, and you'll feel as if you were in an Arabian city, winding your way past high walls of baked mud and doorways surrounded with complicated Arabic designs. Don't miss the Emir's Palace; it's 800 years old! And you won't want to miss Kano's mosque — the largest and most beautiful mosque in Nigeria. Next door to the walled town is the new, modern city of Kano. Here you can find modern stores, offices and hotels, and a large market where you can buy anything from a handcrafted leather bag to an electric hairdryer.

Unlike ancient Kano, Kaduna is a modern city, built in 1912 to be the capital of Kaduna state and an administrative centre for much of the north. Kaduna is famous throughout Nigeria as a "planned city." Because it was designed by city planners, it has wide, restful streets, and housing developments which are laid out in an orderly pattern.



(UNFPA Photo: Eric L. Wheeler)

This young Nigerian is one of many who want to leave their country homes and head for the city to find jobs. Can you think of some reasons why young Africans might prefer city life to country life?

Industry and Work in Nigeria's Cities

— Looking for a Job in Nigeria —

Many of the young Nigerians who flock to the cities are looking for a job. Will they find one? Until recently, Nigeria had a lot of industries which could employ some of these young people. In the 1970s Nigerian industries started to boom. Sixty cloth factories sprang up. A lot of food processing plants — breweries, canneries, flour mills, and sugar factories — were built. The things Nigerians use in their everyday lives — shoes, soap, margarine, paint, tobacco — began to be made in Nigerian factories. And Volkswagen, Peugeot and other car manufacturers built assembly plants so that Nigerians could buy "made in Nigeria" cars.

Now that Nigeria is in debt, things are getting tough for young people looking for jobs. Many of the factories have shut down because Nigeria can't afford to buy parts for the machines. The vehicle assembly plants are either closed or building fewer cars. Many young men and women roam the streets of Lagos and other Nigerian cities looking for jobs.

Nigerians are a resourceful people. If they can't find a job, they often make one. They start their own small businesses, becoming tailors, weavers, blacksmiths, potters, cloth sellers, leather-workers, furniture makers, or mechanics.

But Nigerians are a resourceful people. If they can't find a job, they often make one. They start their own small businesses, becoming tailors, weavers, blacksmiths, potters, cloth sellers, leather-workers, furniture makers, or mechanics. In any Nigerian town or city, if you walk down a commercial street you will find all sorts of interesting things to look at. Over there, under that big tree, someone has set up a barber shop and is busy trimming a customer's hair. In front of the barber is a girl selling oranges from a tray on her head. Nearby is an outdoor bicycle repair shop. Its owner has set up a sandwich board sign, brought out his tool kit, and is busy taking apart a bicycle while the owner looks on. In front of the permanent shops sit women with trays of food, some of them cooking on the spot using small kerosene stoves. People stop to chat with the women and the store owners. Everywhere you look, all the way up the street, people are doing things, buying things, talking and laughing and selling. It's not easy to make a living in Nigeria right now, but Nigerians are a creative people and they work hard in all sorts of different ways to make ends meet.



The Market

— Where City Meets Country —

In North America, when we want to buy groceries we go to a supermarket. When we want to get a new shirt, we go to a clothing or department store. And when we want to meet people for a good time, we visit our friends in their houses. Put all these things together and you have the Nigerian market.

Every small town has its market — sometimes only every week, or every fourth or fifth day — where farmers from the country come to sell their crops, where traders of cloth and clothing and household items set up their stalls, and craftspeople sell their baskets and leather-work. Larger and medium-sized cities have big markets that are open every day.

Let's take a trip to a market in a town in central Nigeria. You'll arrive early in the morning because you want to see the market before the heat of the day. As you get close to the market, you pass farmers arriving with things to sell, women carrying on their heads huge basins filled with yams, a basket-maker bent under the weight of a great cluster of baskets strung together. The townspeople stream into the market too. Since many people in Nigeria don't have refrigerators, they must shop often for food, particularly meat. Babies peer at you from the backs of their mothers; small children chase each other around the legs of their parents.

Once you reach the market, you can see that there are rows of permanent stalls — roughly-built roofed areas — for some of the traders. The market is divided into sections, so it's easy to find what you want. There are the cloth sellers, and over here are the sellers of household goods: pots, calabashes, enamel basins and baskets.

There, in the corner, are the stalls where people sell traditional medicines. The food section is the largest. Most of the food sellers are out in the open, sitting on mats with their vegetables and fruits spread in piles around them. Amongst all the stalls and the piles wander vendors — often children — carrying on their heads trays of food: oranges, kola nuts, or spicy beancakes.

When you decide what you want to buy, you must bargain. "How much is this piece of tie-dye cloth?" you ask.

"Sixty naira," says the trader. "For you, I'll sell it very cheap."

"Sixty naira! That's 'way too expensive. I'll go and try somewhere else."

"No, wait! This is your lucky day; today I must sell. Today I will give you a very, very good deal. Fifty naira . . . finish!"

"No, I can't pay more than forty naira. . . ." And so it continues, until a price is settled. Shopping at the market takes a lot more time than shopping in a supermarket or a department store, but it's also more fun.

Getting Around

—Transportation in Nigeria—

Transportation within the cities consists of a collection of motorcycles, cars, taxis, vans and bicycles, plus a lot of people walking. In some cities you can get a ride on a motorcycle taxi; just hold up your hand when you see a motorcycle coming, and if it's a taxi it will stop to pick you up.

If you want to travel from one city to another in Nigeria, you have a number of choices. Nigeria has around 124,000 km of roads, almost half of them paved. At one time the main way to get around was to squeeze into a "lorry," a large truck that shuddered and bumped over the roads, jammed with people. Nowadays there are still lorries but many of them have been replaced by buses, vans and taxis. Because of Nigeria's debt, it's hard to get new parts for the cars and vans, so they aren't always in good running order. And there isn't always enough money to repair the roads properly, so drivers have to watch out for potholes. The Nigerian government is now trying to build new roads in the rural areas to help farmers bring their crops to the cities.

Or you might try rail, air or water. Nigeria has a 3,404 km railway network. Lagos, Kano, and Calabar have international airports, and a number of private air companies fly regularly to Nigerian cities. There are also 8885 km of navigable inland waterways, mainly the Niger and Benue rivers and their tributaries.

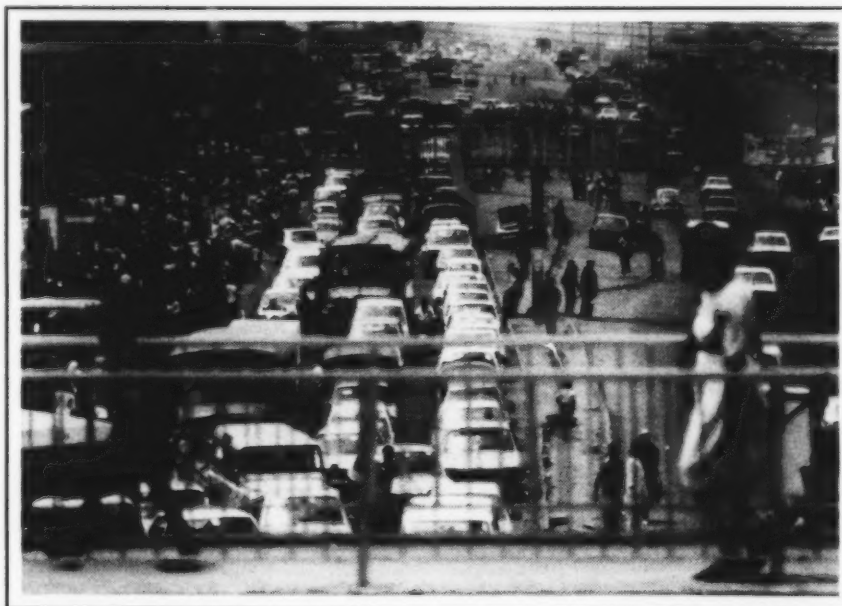
For shorter distances of a few kilometers, the main "Nigerian style" form of transportation is walking. On a market day you will still see a long stream of people, loads balanced on their heads, walking kilometer after kilometer.

Traffic, Lagos-Style

Lagos is famous for its traffic jams. There are bottle-necks on the bridges, and too many cars for the number of parking spaces. In 1976 the government decided on an unusual traffic-control law: on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, only cars with odd-numbered licence plates could drive into the city, and on Tuesdays and Thursdays only cars with even numbers were allowed. This worked well for a while, but then wealthy Nigerians began to buy two cars, one with an odd-numbered licence plate and one with an even-numbered licence plate.

In 1989 the government decided to try another idea. They increased the cost of gasoline to private car owners. This helped a little, but there are still 200,000 cars driving into Lagos every day, and only 50,000 parking spaces.

What's the answer? Although Lagos has a lot of public buses, vans and taxis to transport people, there are not enough for its huge population. The Nigerian government did have plans for a new bus system, but it doesn't have enough money to buy the buses. Even when there are buses available, Nigerians — like North Americans — often choose to drive their own cars rather than to take a bus. Can you think of any answers to this problem?



(CIDA Photo: Bruce Paton)

Cars, cars, cars — a problem in Nigerian cities

— Activities —

POINTS OF VIEW



• Finding a Home

"Roughly 20 percent of the world's five billion people live in inadequate housing, and 100 million of them have no shelter at all."

— UN World Health Organization, September 1987

The Nigerians who flock to Lagos and other cities are like people all over the world who are leaving the country and moving to the city. It is estimated that by the year 2,000, 2 billion people will live in cities, and many of them will be squatters—people who don't own or rent their homes, but live in little makeshift shacks which may be bulldozed at any time. What are some of the answers to this problem? In your class or in small groups, discuss this question, thinking about

- ★ building new and better housing;
- ★ giving squatters help in improving their homes;
- ★ encouraging people to stay in the countryside, or in smaller towns;
- ★ creating more jobs in the cities, so that people will be paid and can use their pay to rent good homes.

• In North America, some people don't have homes. An estimated 50,000 New Yorkers live on the streets, and Canadian cities, too, have people who live on the streets. Compare the problem in North America to the problem in Africa. What causes of homelessness are the same? What causes are different? What solutions are the same? different?

HANDS ON



• Nigerian Town Scene

Read pages 85 to 87 to give you an idea of what a Nigerian town is like. Now set up your class to be a Nigerian town scene. You will need to have a main street, with shops under the trees and small businesses behind. In one corner, you'll want to have a marketplace where the farmers, traders, and craftspeople will sell their wares.

Each person in the class will need to act a part. You may need to spend a day or two preparing for the town scene—making pictures of your crops if you're a farmer, or collecting props. One way to make it more fun is to have half the class be sellers and businesspeople while the other half are customers, and then change roles.

For some roles you might like to try, turn the page.

Businesses along the street: tailor, bicycle repair person, barber, food vendors, leather-worker, calabash carver, weaver, taxi driver

In the market: farmer, cloth seller, beggar, butcher, seller of pots, traditional medicine seller, food vendor, seller of spare bicycle parts

Remember, never buy anything without bargaining, especially in the market.

LET'S DISCUSS



- **Traffic!**

Lagos is famous for its traffic jams, but Lagos certainly isn't the only city that has traffic problems. Other mega-cities like Mexico City and Los Angeles are also choked by cars and car fumes. As well as traffic problems, cars cause an even more dangerous problem: global warming.

Lagos came up with some interesting solutions to the traffic problem (read page 88). What other solutions can you come up with to the problem of cars, cars, cars?

MEDIA REPORT



- **Maroko Report**

July 14, 1990, Lagos. You are the reporter at the scene, watching as the people of Maroko see their homes being bulldozed. Write a report for radio or TV describing the scene and interviewing some of the people involved — the town planner from Lagos, a person from Maroko, the driver of the bulldozer.

LET'S FIND OUT



- **Exploding Cities**

Lagos and Ibadan are two Nigerian cities which are bulging at the seams. All over the world there are "mega-cities" sprouting up as more and more people head to the cities. Here are the world's 10 largest cities:

Mexico City, Mexico	Beijing, China
São Paulo, Brazil	Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Shanghai, China	Bombay, India
Tokyo, Japan	Calcutta, India
New York, USA	Jakarta, Indonesia

Find out all the information you can about one of these cities. How fast has it grown over the past 20 years? What are some of the problems of this city, and how are city planners dealing with them? Why are people leaving the countryside to come to this city? What do you think are some of the solutions?



WATER and HEALTH

"The number of water taps per 1,000 persons is a better indication of health than the number of hospital beds."

—World Health Organization

- **Why do 10% of Nigerian babies die before they are a year old?**
- **Why is drinking river water hazardous to your health?**
- **Are new hospitals the answer to better health?**

Keeping Healthy in Nigeria ***—Some Interesting Facts***

	IMR	Under 5 mortality	Access to Clean Water	Daily per capita calorie supply as % of requirement	% of people with access to health services	% of children immunized against measles
Nigeria	104	174	46	90	40	59
Senegal	80	136	53	99	40	53
USA	10	13	100	138	100	82
Canada	7	8	100	129	100	85

(Figures from UNICEF, State of the World's Children, 1990)

Let's look at the figures in this table, and make sure we understand what they mean.

- **IMR stands for Infant Mortality Rate.** This means that, of every 1,000 babies born in Nigeria, 104, or just over 10%, die before they are a year old.
- **Under 5 Mortality Rate** is similar, but it looks at all the children who die before they are five years old. In Nigeria, that is 174 out of every 1,000 children, or over 17%.
- **Access to clean water** is a figure that shows the percentage of people who live near a well or a tap which provides clean water. In Nigeria, as in many other

countries, this figure is different for rural people and city people. Most people in the city have clean water available (although some people may not be able to afford clean water if it is brought by truck). But only 20% of rural people have clean water nearby.

- **Daily per capita calorie supply as % of requirement** asks the question: are these people getting enough food? Nigerians are getting only 90% of the food they really need to keep healthy. Canadians are getting 129% of the food they need, and Americans 138%. Of course, in both cases the food is not spread around evenly. In Nigeria, as in North America, there are people who eat more food than they need, and some who are really hungry a lot of the time.
- **% of people with access to health services** shows how many people can go to a clinic or a hospital if they need medical care.
- **% of children immunized against measles** shows how many children receive vaccinations. There are four major vaccinations which help to save children's lives: tuberculosis, diphtheria/whooping cough/ tetanus, polio, and measles. In Nigeria, the figure for measles vaccinations (59%) is about the same for all of the vaccinations except tuberculosis, which is higher (72%).

Water

— Clean Water, Healthy Lives —

Canada: 7:00 a.m. The alarm rings and Shauna jumps out of bed. Just time for a shower! She rushes into the bathroom and turns the tap on full to heat the water up. Then she turns on the shower and spends five minutes waking up under the pounding hot water. A quick brush of her teeth, and she's off to breakfast. "Porridge!" her dad exclaims as he puts the pot of water on to boil. "Now, if you'll just mix up that frozen orange juice concentrate, we'll be ready to eat in no time."

Nigeria: 7:00 a.m. Zenabu sighs with relief as she carefully lowers the heavy clay pot from her head to the ground. It's such a long way to go for water in the dry season! She has been up for two hours, and all she has done is walk to the water hole three kilometers away, and walk back. Now she must get ready for school or she'll be late. Carefully, she helps her mother dip a little of the water out to mix with the millet for porridge. "I hope the water lasts today!" she thinks. "If I have to go again after school I don't know how I'll get my homework done."

Think of all the ways we use water in Canada. We are used to turning on a tap and getting all the fresh, pure water we need. So it's hard for us to imagine what it would be like to be a Nigerian girl who must walk for kilometers, carrying a heavy pot on her head, to bring water — often water that's not clean — for the family.



Waiting for water at the town tap. Most Nigerian houses, even in the towns, do not have piped-in running water.

Impure water is the big killer in many developing countries like Nigeria. There are many diseases people can get when they drink water that has bacteria and other parasites in it. One of the reasons why so many Nigerian children die before they reach their fifth birthday is that they don't have a supply of pure water. The World Health Organization, which is a big United Nations organization trying to help all the people in the world to become healthier, said this: "The number of water taps per 1,000 persons is a better indication of health than the number of hospital beds." Nigeria is working on this problem but, because there isn't much money, progress towards building new wells or fixing old ones is slow.

Staying Healthy in Nigeria

Looking for Appropriate Health Care

- **Traditional Medicine**

In the past, one of the important people in a Nigerian village was the traditional healer, or "witch doctor." When a person became sick, it was often thought that the sickness was caused by witchcraft or evil spirits, and the traditional healer would suggest different charms and remedies.

Even today if you go to a Nigerian market you will find stalls of traditional charms and herbs, and in rural areas many people consult traditional healers when they are ill. Just as people are discovering in North America that some of the old herbal remedies actually do help people get well, although some may be useless or harmful, Africans are realizing that some of their traditional remedies work but some don't. Today, most Nigerians want western medicine to protect and heal them.

• Western Medicine

The first hospital in Nigeria was a Methodist mission hospital built in 1912. Other mission hospitals followed. Today Nigeria has one doctor for every 7,990 people. (In Canada, the figure is one doctor for every 510 people, and in the USA, one doctor for every 470 people.)

The question that Nigerians — along with other Africans — are starting to ask is this: *What is the most appropriate form of health care for Nigeria?* Right now, most of the doctors, nurses and hospitals are in the cities. If rural people get sick they must travel long distances for medical help.

In 1978 representatives from 150 different countries met to discuss health. They tried to think of a way the whole world could have good health care by the year 2000. The answer they came up with is called **Primary Health Care (PHC)**. Instead of spending money on expensive hospitals and doctors, PHC spends the money on training a large number of community health care workers, one for each village. Each village decides who will be their community health care worker, and that person goes to the city for a short training period. The health care workers learn about the importance of clean water and sanitation, healthy nutrition, and simple ways to help keep people healthy. Many children die of diarrhoea in Nigeria, and community health care workers are trained to give sick children ORT (Oral Rehydration Therapy), a very cheap mixture of salt, sugar and water that will make the children well again.

PHC also tries to get as many children as possible vaccinated. In Nigeria the number of vaccinations has just about doubled since 1981. Protecting a child for life against six major "killer diseases" costs about \$5 per child.

African mothers line up to have their children vaccinated



(CIDA Photo: Doug Curran)

— Activities —

POINTS OF VIEW • Reading Cartoons



New Internationalist



Both of these cartoons have a message about health, and what kind of “cure” is necessary for the health problems of Nigeria and other Third World countries. What do you think the cartoonist is trying to say in each cartoon?

Look at the table on page 91. How does Nigeria rate on *access to clean water*, and *daily per capita calorie supply as % of requirement*? How does Nigeria rate on IMR (infant mortality rate)? Why do you think Nigeria has such a high infant mortality rate?

Imagine you are a member of an international aid organization, and you want to improve the infant mortality rate in a region of Nigeria. Form into groups, and decide which 3 of the following projects your organization would fund. Be prepared to explain your answer to the rest of the class.

- ★ a large, modern hospital in the state capital
- ★ a network of wells and pumps in the rural areas, with training of maintenance people

- ★ training of village health workers to weigh babies, help with vaccinations, and give mothers hints on nutrition and health
- ★ bags of North American wheat and milk powder
- ★ bringing Nigerian doctors and nurses to North America for more training
- ★ a shipment of medicines
- ★ help with farming methods and seeds
- ★ a vaccination program for children under 5
- ★ a team of North American doctors to visit the region
- ★ a sum of money for the Nigerian Ministry of Health to use any way they choose

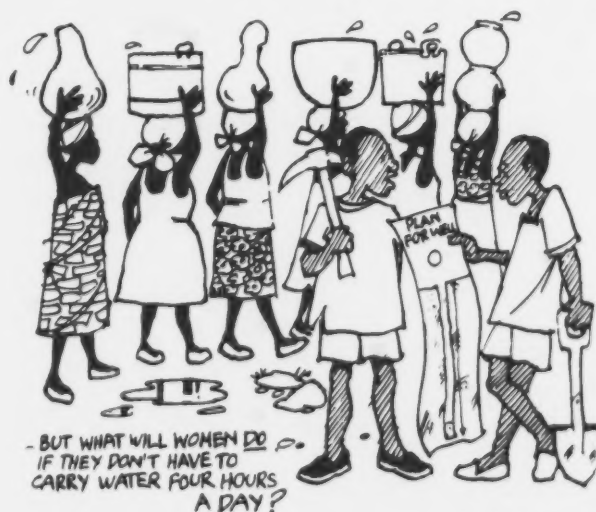
HANDS ON



• Bringing Home the Water

When we see pictures of women and children carrying water on their heads, often we don't realize just how heavy a large bucket of water is, and how hard it is to carry without slopping. Here's something your class can do to imagine what it would be like to carry water several kilometers each day. Find a walk near your school about 1 km in length.

Break up into groups of 5 or 6 students, each with a 20-litre bucket. Fill the bucket with water, and take turns carrying it part of the 1 km route. Carry it any way you can, individually or in pairs. Be careful not to spill! When you're finished, go back into your classroom and talk about what it felt like. Think about what it would be like to carry that load for 5 km. How would the lives of people in your family be different if you had to collect water from a long distance every day? Think about the things you might change in your everyday life.



© CWDE

• **Using Water**

Canadians are the largest users of clean water in the world — and Americans are not far behind. Keep track of your family's water use for a day. Try to mark down every time someone uses water for

- the bath, shower, washing, brushing teeth, toilet flushing
- cooking
- laundry
- gardening

You can figure out about how much that adds up to by using the table below.

Turning On the Tap

The Amounts of Water We Regularly Use in Our Homes

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Use</i>	<i>Litres Used</i>
Shower	water running	100
Brushing teeth	tap running	40
Shaving	tap running	80
Automatic dishwasher	full cycle	64
Washing hands	tap running	8
Toilet flushing	depending on tank size	20 - 28
Washing machine	full cycle, top water level	240
Outdoor watering	per minute	40

What are some of the ways you could use less water? Think of how you could conserve water in each of the activities in column one.

LET'S DISCUSS

times helpful? When can they be harmful? What would you say to a Nigerian mother who is wondering where she should take her sick child?

- Primary health care is a good idea for Africa, and might be a good idea for some places in North America, too. Discuss this idea.

- "The number of water taps per 1,000 persons is a better indication of health than the number of hospital beds." Using data from the table on page 91, discuss why this statement might be true.

- Traditional medicine is popular in Nigeria, and also, on occasion, in North America. How many of you have used a traditional remedy, like chicken soup or garlic or honey for a cold? Discuss traditional medicines you have heard about. Are traditional remedies some-

MEDIA REPORT

- The village of Musura is about to get a new well. The villagers have worked with Nigerian government officials to get the materials, and they are doing much of the work of building the well themselves. But not everyone in Musura understands why it's important for them to get their water from the well rather than from a nearby river. Not everyone understands how important it is to keep animals away from the well and keep the area around the well clean.

Write a skit which you will act out in front of the villagers (remember, they may not all be able to read), in order to explain why clean water is so important to them.

LET'S FIND OUT

- **What's Hiding in the Water?**
Do some research on just what is lurking in that unclean water. What diseases can you get from drinking water that isn't pure? What insects breed in water and carry dangerous diseases? Write a report on the hazards of impure water.



EDUCATION

With the cost of uniforms, books, and school fees to worry about, some Nigerian families must choose which of their children can go to school.

- *How are Nigerian and North American schools different? the same?*
- *Why are there only a few rural students in Nigerian secondary schools?*

Before the Europeans

— Traditional and Arabic Education —

When we talk about "education," often we really mean "western" or "European" education. Nigerian young people were educated long before white people arrived with their schools and textbooks; they were taught the history of their people through stories passed down from parents to children. When they helped their parents in the fields or at home, they learned about agriculture and crafts.

This kind of education still goes on, especially in the rural areas. In their homes, boys imitate their fathers and girls their mothers. Children learn about farming by helping their parents in the fields. They learn the stories and proverbs of their people from the elders of the community.

Often young people become apprentices to tradespeople in order to learn a trade. If you want to become a goldsmith, you will work for a number of years with a goldsmith until you learn everything you need to know.

In northern Nigeria, koranic schools were operating long before European education arrived. In 1919 an official report estimated there were 25,000 koranic schools in northern Nigeria as well as many higher level Arabic schools. Today many young people in the north are still students of Islam, learning to read and write in Arabic from the time they are five or six years old.

Western Education

— From Small Beginnings to Massive Movement —

Christian missionaries brought western education to southern Nigeria, beginning in 1842. But there weren't enough schools for all the Nigerian children who wanted to learn. In 1970, ten years after Nigeria became independent, only 35 percent of men and 14 percent of women could read and write.

Since independence, Nigeria has tried very hard to increase its education level. In 1976 the Nigerian government introduced free primary education for all Nigerian children. Suddenly, even poor people could send their children to school! Lots of children enrolled. The problem was that there weren't enough buildings, equipment or teachers. Imagine trying to learn in a room where only half the children had desks!

Now that the government is having debt problems, students in most areas must pay school fees. They also need to buy uniforms, books and supplies. This means poor families with many children will have to choose which children can go to school. Today about 77 percent of Nigerian children go to primary school, and about 63 percent who begin in grade one make it through to the end of primary school.

• ***Life as a Nigerian Primary Student***

If you were to visit a Nigerian primary school, you'd notice some differences from Canadian elementary schools. First of all, everyone would be wearing a uniform. For the boys it would be a shirt and shorts, and for the girls a shirt, skirt,



Lots of crowding and not much equipment, but students try to make up for it by working very hard.

and scarf, all in the school colour. Students learn in their own language first, then switch to English after the first three years. You'd probably notice the classes seem large compared to Canadian classes, and that there isn't much equipment. There's a blackboard for the teacher and exercise books for the students.

But in some ways you'd feel right at home in a Nigerian school. Children play games in the playground just like Canadian children do. Soccer is a big favourite among the boys. Girls like to run, skip and play circle games. A favourite relay race for Nigerian girls involves running from one end of the field to the other balancing a large bottle on their head. If they drop the bottle, they start from the beginning again. If you like challenges, you might like to try this some time!

• ***On to Secondary School***

Although there are primary schools dotted all over Nigeria, there aren't nearly as many secondary schools. In 1987 there were 11,276,270 pupils in primary school, but only 2,858,372 in secondary schools. Why did so many of the students drop out after elementary school?

If you were a Nigerian student living in a big city like Ibadan or Lagos, it would be fairly easy to go to secondary school, although your family would still have to find the money for books, fees and uniforms. But if you were a rural student living in a small village, you would have to go to a secondary boarding school in one of the towns or cities. Most farming families make only \$100 a year, and even though the boarding school fees aren't nearly as expensive as those in North American boarding schools, it is very difficult for these families to pay for books, uniforms and school fees.

Nigerian students are at their studies bright and early. Classes usually start at about 8:00 a.m. and finish at 2:00 p.m., with a short recess in the middle for a snack. Because the schools are so crowded, often students stay in the afternoon to take turns on the laboratory equipment, so they may not get home for lunch until late in the day.



Soccer: a favourite sport for Nigerian boys

On Friday — the holy day for Muslims — school often ends early so that Muslim students can go to prayer. On Saturday afternoon inter-school sports are often held. By far the most popular sport is soccer, which in Nigeria is called football. Right from the time they are little boys, Nigerian boys practice football. Often they play in bare feet, with old, worn-out balls. By the time they are in secondary school, football has become an important part of life and inter-school competition is very intense.

• ***And Finally, University***

Nigeria is also a university centre. The first university, the University of Ibadan, was founded in 1948. There are now 28 universities in Nigeria, as well as many polytechnics where students study practical sciences such as engineering. In 1987 there were 132,000 students attending Nigerian universities. However, like the schools, the universities are having problems because of Nigeria's debt. Libraries have few books, and classrooms and laboratories are badly equipped. Students must put up with shortages of water and electricity. Since 1960 there have been many students' protests against the government. University students have been shot and killed, and universities have been shut down. Read more about this on pages 31 to 32.

Despite the problems, Nigerians struggle to improve their education. People in poor families eat less so their children can go to school and improve their lives. In Nigeria, education is considered the ticket to the future.

Appropriate Education

— What Education Makes Sense for Nigerians? —

You might feel quite at home at school in Nigeria, because many of the subjects are the same as in North America: reading and writing, arithmetic, social studies, and science. When Nigeria first became independent, Nigerian students studied the work of English writers and learned about English history and geography. But Nigerians began to ask: "What sort of education would make sense for Nigerians?" Slowly Nigerian students began to study African writers, and learn about their own history and geography.

Once they have finished school, students in Nigeria have the problem of finding a job. Often that is not easy. There are not enough jobs in the cities for all the students who graduate. Yet often the rural students who finish school or university don't want to go back to their villages to farm. They have become used to electricity and running water. They want an office job, not a farming job.

What's the answer? Most schools in Nigeria now offer agriculture as a subject so students can learn to be good farmers. But Nigerians, like North Americans, still worry about what kind of education is most appropriate for their children.

— Activities —

POINTS OF VIEW



• Getting to Secondary School

Gloria has just finished the elementary school in her small village. She has done well, coming out near the top of her class. Now she and her family are trying to decide whether or not she should go on in her education. There is no secondary school in her village, so if she is to continue she must go to a boarding school. This is not as expensive in Nigeria as it would be here, since the secondary boarding schools are financed by the government. But there are still

lots of expenses: a school fee, uniforms, money for transportation there and back. Gloria has five younger brothers and sisters and the family can't afford to send all of them to secondary school. What should they do?

Form into groups of 7, and each take one of these roles:

★ *Gloria's mother:*

"Gloria is so much help at home. She's a good worker, and she takes good care of the younger children. I'll miss her help. Yet, she would make such a good teacher, and I do want her to do well in life . . ."

★ *Gloria's little brother, Ezra:*

"If Gloria goes to school, the family may not have enough money to send me to school. I'm the one who will have to be the head of a family, and make money, not Gloria. Boys should have priority!"

★ *Auntie Grace:*

"I am married to a good man, and have six children who are still alive. I didn't need schooling to be where I am, and neither does Gloria. She will just get all kinds of crazy ideas, and where will they get her? She will just be unhappy in her position of wife."

★ *Gloria's father:*

"I don't like the thought of Gloria going to the city and living with young people in a dormitory. She's a good girl, but she needs her family with her, or who knows what trouble she may get into?"

As well, all this education — I don't know if it's a good idea for girls. Gloria is already a good cook, and she will be a good mother. If she gets too educated, she'll be no use at home, and no young man will want to marry her. After all, no one wants to marry a girl who has more education than he has!"

★ *Auntie Emeka:*

"I am a trader, and I have done very well, even though I have never been to school. But Gloria is very smart, and she should go to school to get ahead. She will be a blessing to her family because she can then help the rest of them get ahead."

★ *Gloria's school principal, Mr. Olushegun:*

"Gloria is one of the best students I have ever had. If Nigeria is to progress, we need to educate students like Gloria, who is creative, intelligent and hard working. I hope she may go on!"

★ *Gloria:*

"I would like to graduate from secondary school and get a good job in the city. But if I leave my family and my village, will I be leaving all my traditions behind? Will I ever be able to come back? Maybe I should stay home and get married."

Hold a group meeting and come to a decision. Be prepared to explain your decision to the rest of the class.

Some class discussion topics to follow the group meetings:

- ★ Why is it more difficult for Gloria to decide on whether to go to secondary school than it would be for a North American student?
- ★ If Gloria had been a boy, the discussion might have been different. In Nigeria, fewer girls than boys go to school. Are there any ways in which girls and boys receive different education in North America?
- ★ If Gloria gets to secondary school, how hard do you think she'll work?

(This simulation was adapted from Margaret Maxwell, Ed., African Studies Handbook for Elementary and Secondary School Teachers, Third Edition)

HANDS ON



• Wish You Were Here

You are in Nigeria, visiting a friend in the sixth year of elementary school. Write a letter to your class at home, telling them what it's like to go to school in Nigeria. What things are the same? different? What things do you really like? not like? What things do you think your friends at home could learn from Nigerian children?

LET'S DISCUSS



• Struggling to Learn

"Only the thing for which you have struggled will last."

— Yoruba proverb

In Nigeria it's a struggle to get an education. Families sacrifice for school uniforms, books, and school fees. Students know that not all children are able to have an education. North American teachers who visit Nigeria find that students are very eager to learn, and work very hard on their schoolwork.

What do you think North American students can learn from Nigerian students about getting an education?

MEDIA REPORT



• A Day in the Life

Think about an average Monday in your life. Write down all the things you do from the time you get up until the time you go to bed. Now think about what a day in the life of a Nigerian student might be like. You could choose from a number of different kinds of students: a farming student, a city student, a secondary school boarding student.

Write an article for your school or community newspaper on "a day in the life of a student," which describes your average day, and a Nigerian student's average day, and highlights some of the similarities and the differences.



ENVIRONMENT

"I live in Ibadan, a city of 3 million. It has expanded enormously in the last 15 years, eating into the surrounding rainforest. I used to live on the outskirts of the city. Today not a single tree can be seen from my house, right up to the horizon.

— Tunde Morakinyo, 1990

- *Where in the world can you find a red-bellied monkey?*
- *What is "toxic terrorism"?*
- *What could North Americans learn from Nigerians about cleaning up their neighbourhoods?*

North American Problems, Nigerian Problems

— Thinking About Environment —

Environment — it's something everyone worries about. In Canada and the United States, people worry about things like global warming, pollution, deforestation and waste. What do people in Nigeria worry about? Well, some of the things are the same, some are different.

- **Deforestation** has become a big worry. For many years Nigeria cut down its huge tropical rainforest trees and sent them to other countries. Then suddenly Nigerians noticed that most of the trees were gone. In 1960 Nigeria had 9 million hectares of tropical rainforest, and in 1985 there were only 3 million hectares left.

What happened to all those trees? Most of them were shipped out raw, as logs, to European countries. Nigerian logging companies got some money, but the only jobs Nigerians got from the forests were logging jobs and hauling jobs. There are very few saw mills or pulp mills in Nigeria.

Conservationists have been working hard to save some of Nigeria's rainforest. A Nigerian conservation group, working with the World Wildlife Fund, persuaded the Nigerian government to set aside the Oban National Rainforest Park, a large rainforest area in southeastern Nigeria. They are now working to protect the Okomu Forest Reserve,



Okomu Forest Reserve, the only place in the world where the endangered red-bellied monkey (*Cercopithecus Erythrogaster*) lives.

The third large area they would like to protect is the Omo Forest Reserve, but there they face a major problem: the World Bank has decided to give money to a project to cut down all the trees in the Omo Forest Reserve and to re-plant the area with fast-growing trees for a paper mill. That means 2,600 sq. km of tropical rainforest, with all the wildlife that lives there, will be lost. Nigerian conservationists are working hard, but they are not hopeful.

When the forests disappear, wildlife species begin to disappear too. Nigerians have tried to save some of their wildlife by setting up the Yankari Game Reserve, east of Jos — 2,244 sq. km of land filled with waterbucks, elephants, hippos, lions and monkeys. Even in Yankari, however, these animals aren't completely safe since there are always poachers who will hunt them for their hides and tusks.

- **Erosion and desertification** are terrible threats in Nigeria and many other African countries. Trees are cut down for fuel and the soil blows away. Cattle herders are forced onto small areas of land as the farmers move further into the grasslands, and the cattle trample the grass and erode the soil. (Read more about this problem on pages 5 to 7.)

- **Toxic Waste** has become a "hot topic" in Nigeria. In the past few years ships have begun arriving from Europe or the US, with captains offering to pay Nigerians some money to dump their loads of toxic waste — waste that people in Europe and the US don't want to have stored near them. Many Nigerians, such as Information Minister Tony Momoh, call this "toxic terrorism."

Lessons from Nigeria

— How Nigerians Care for Their Environment —

Nigeria can teach Canadians some things about the environment.

- **Planting Trees:** About twice a year Nigeria has a tree planting day. Top Nigerian officials go out and publicly plant trees and all Nigerians, from pre-schoolers to grannies, are given free seedlings and encouraged to plant them. Throughout the year, radio and TV commercials send out the message — "Plant two trees every day!" A favourite school project is tree planting.
- **Clean up Your Act:** The last Saturday of each month all over Nigeria is Environmental Sanitation Day, in which every family is expected to clean up its house, its compound, its yard, and the nearby street. No one can travel between 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. If people leave their area without cleaning up, they can be fined.
- **Waste Not:** If you go to a market in Nigeria, you will see the 3 Rs — refuse, re-use and recycle — going on all around you. People arrive at the market with their own containers — baskets and calabashes. Food is sometimes wrapped in a banana leaf; bottles, plastic containers and tins are washed and re-used, although in the past few years Nigerians have begun to use plastic bags.
- **Want Not:** Nigerians have less than Canadians of a whole lot of things: TV sets, Nintendo sets, cars, plastic toys. Nigerians still like to buy these things if they can afford to. Yet most visitors to Nigeria are amazed to find that Nigerians manage to be happy without all these things. Children make toys and share them. People have fun being together — discussing, dancing, singing, visiting, working.



(CIDA photo: Bruce Paton)

Growing seedlings for Nigerians to plant

Learning to be Content

The Foolish Goat

(translated from Ibo)

Leader: A certain goat picked up a piece of yam

Chorus: Nzamiri

Leader: And wanted to cross a river

Chorus: Nzamiri

Leader: There was a plank for a bridge

Chorus: Nzamiri

Leader: And the goat stood on the bridge

Chorus: Nzamiri

Leader: He was fascinated by the river

Chorus: Nzamiri

Leader: It was the first he had ever seen

Chorus: Nzamiri

Leader: Looking into the water he saw an image

Chorus: Nzamiri

Leader: Little did he know it was his own image

Chorus: Nzamiri

Leader: He noticed the yam in the goat's mouth

Chorus: Nzamiri

Leader: He felt it was bigger than his

Chorus: Nzamiri

Leader: "I want that yam," he said

Chorus: Nzamiri

Leader: "And I must get it," he concluded

Chorus: Nzamiri

Chorus: Nzamiri - zanza - nzanza

Nzamiri - zanza - nzamiri

S-sh-hs-sh-sh-sh-ssh-hh

Leader: The water roared as he dived in

Chorus: S-sh-hs-sh-sh-sh-s-sh-hh

Leader: The torrents thundered in anger

The foolish goat was drowned

Chorus: Nzamiri

Leader: Greed caused his death

Chorus: Nzamiri

Leader: The lesson from the story

Chorus: Nzamiri

Leader: Is that we must be content

With what we have.

Chorus: Nzamiri

Nzamiri - zanza - nzanza

Nzamiri - zanza - nzanza

By Rems Nna
Umeasiegbu, from his
collection of Ibo customs
and stories — *The Way
We Lived*, Heinemann,
1969.

— Activities —

POINTS OF VIEW



• Keeping the Rainforests

Scientists worry about the cutting of rainforests for a number of reasons:

- ★ Rainforests affect climate. The cutting of rainforest trees increases global warming and affects the recycling of moisture around the planet.
- ★ Many of the rainforest plants contain important cures for diseases. If we destroy the rainforests we may be killing off plants that could help us. The cure for leukemia, for

instance, was discovered in the rosy periwinkle plant which grows in the jungles of Madagascar. Ninety-five percent of Madagascar's jungle is now gone.

But many governments in tropical countries like Nigeria are in debt. They need to cut down their rainforest trees to pay their debts and to get food for their people.

Look at the rainforest question from a number of different points of view:

- a Nigerian government official
- a Nigerian environmentalist
- a North American scientist
- a Nigerian logger
- a North American environmentalist
- a Nigerian farmer

On a large piece of paper, write down the name of each of these people, and beside each person draw a big thought-balloon, like this:



Then write in the balloon what the person might say about this problem of what should be done about the rainforest. At the bottom, put your own name, and draw a really big thought-balloon. Write in this balloon what *you* think the answer might be. (One thing to think about is this: is there any way that the richer countries could help the poorer countries to preserve their rainforests?)

HANDS ON



• Tree Planting Day

In many parts of Africa, including Nigeria, government officials, radio and TV stations, schools and community groups are all trying to get across one message: Plant Trees! In Nigeria there is a special tree planting day about twice a year. You might like to organize a tree planting day for your school. You will need to check with your city government or

your school board to see where the best place to plant the trees would be. Often, forestry companies or government forestry departments have free seedlings. When you're planting the trees, think of Nigerian children planting trees too.

• **Learn to be Content**

Practice the Ibo folk-poem on page 108, with a small group being the leader and a larger group being the chorus. When you've finished, think about this idea: The Ibo people made up this poem because they wanted their children to learn something from it. What would Ibo children learn from this poem? What can North American children learn from it?

LET'S DISCUSS



• **Waste Not, Want Not**

On average, each Canadian throws away about 2 kg of garbage every day, each American throws away 1.8 kg, and each Nigerian throws away .46 kg. Think of this scene: The year is 2010. There is no more room in North America to dump garbage — almost all available space has been used, and the only way North Americans can be saved from being buried in their own garbage is to cut back to the Nigerian level of garbage production. That

means North Americans must reduce their garbage by 75%. You are a government official, in charge of coming up with a point-by-point plan about how your country is going to reduce its waste. Outline your plan.

Once the plans have been written, get into small groups and discuss your plan with the other people there. Draw up a master plan for your group, which you will present to the rest of the class.

MEDIA REPORT



• **Through Nigerian Eyes**

You are a Nigerian newspaper reporter. You are visiting North America, and one of the sights you have been taken to see is the garbage dump of a major North American city. You are amazed at all the things you see there, things that in Nigeria would be repaired and used again. You also tour a local school and notice amazing things thrown away: paper which has writing on only one side, whole

sandwiches and apples, bags and containers. Write a newspaper article entitled: "Cutting Down on Waste: A Nigerian Point of View."

LET'S FIND OUT



• **A Hot Issue**

Toxic waste is a thorny problem for politicians in North America. No one wants to have toxic waste stored near them because it causes health problems. But no one in the Third World wants to have toxic waste near them, either. What is toxic waste? What does it come from? What are some of the answers to the problem of toxic waste?



DEVELOPMENT DECISIONS

Nigeria counted on oil money to help build schools, roads, factories. It seemed to make sense to borrow money for these important projects. Then suddenly, the price of oil went down. Now Nigeria, like many African countries, is being strangled by debt.

- *How could Nigeria go so quickly from "big bucks" to big debt?*
- *What are Nigeria's future choices?*

Where is Nigeria Heading?

— Dealing with the Debt Crunch —

As Nigeria heads towards the year 2000, it faces — like most developing countries — difficult problems. Some of these problems are internal ones. Can you think back over the things we've discussed, and think what these internal problems might be?

One of Nigeria's big problems has to do with the rest of the world. That problem is debt. You might have been in debt some time in your life, when you borrowed some money and had to owe it to someone for a while.

Why is Nigeria in debt? The main reason has to do with world prices. Nigeria, like many African countries, gets money from other countries by selling things like cocoa, rubber and oil. Sometimes we call these things — things that are grown or mined, rather than made in factories — **commodities**. When oil was discovered, Nigerians thought the future looked bright. The price of oil was very high, and Nigeria got a lot of money to spend on schools and hospitals and factories. The Nigerian government even borrowed money from North American and European

banks and governments, because they thought they could easily pay the money back once their factories were working.

But suddenly the price of oil went down. Nigeria was stuck with a big bill it couldn't pay. Nigeria wasn't the only country with this problem. Most of the countries of Latin America, Asia and Africa owe huge debts to banks and governments in North America and Europe. The problem is that oil isn't the only thing to go down in price; all commodity prices have gone down. This graph

shows how the prices of commodities have gone down, down, down since 1980. At the same time, the prices of the things Nigeria needed to buy — engine parts, trucks, medicines — went up!

Right now Nigeria owes over \$30 billion dollars to banks in North America and Europe. Of all the money Nigeria makes from selling things to other countries, over 25% has to be used to pay the interest on the debt.

What does this mean for ordinary Nigerians? It means that the money which should be helping Nigerians get health clinics and irrigation and education is going to pay the debt. Development in Nigeria, as in the rest of Africa, has gone downhill since 1980.

World Trade

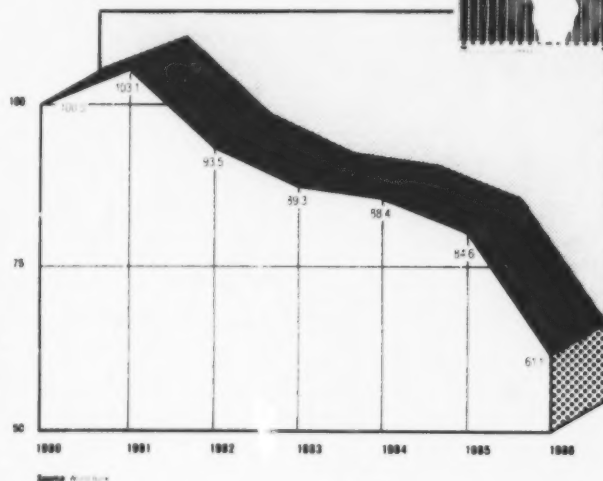
—What's Fair?—

Nigerians point out that world trade isn't really fair. The prices of things like oil and cocoa are not decided in Nigeria, but by traders in London and New York. Nigeria and other developing countries have asked for a New International Economic Order, whereby countries like Nigeria would get better prices for what they produce. "How can we plan our budget," they ask, "when we never know what is going to happen to our prices?"

Some Canadians and Americans have pointed out that Africa's debt is hurting North America too. Because the African countries are so poor they don't have any money to buy North American machines or other products, so Canadian and American workers lose their jobs.

Commodity Export Prices

(Index 1980 = 100)



Some people think the only way to get things going again is to "forgive" the debt — just to forget about it and let countries like Nigeria try to develop again. The banks don't like this idea. Some Nigerians are calling for a "debtors' cartel" — for a group of countries to get together and all bargain together for better terms from the banks.

Meanwhile, the people who really suffer from the debt are Nigeria's children. More of them are dying because of lack of health care, and fewer are going to school because the government is having to charge school fees.

Where is Nigeria Heading? ***— Setting Priorities***

Here is an article which shows two different points of view on how Nigeria's money should be spent. The Nigerian government, just like the Canadian government, must make difficult decisions about how to spend the money. What decisions would you make if you were a member of the Nigerian government?

No Defence

Former Head of State General Olusegun Obasanjo has blamed the country's economic problems on the vast amount of money spent on defence and debt repayments.

Speaking at a workshop organised by Nigeria's Junior Chamber (Jaycee) at his farm in Ota, Ogun State, he said: "We cannot continue to spend about 50 per cent of our income on debt servicing and defence expenditure and be able to make progress." He called for a debtors' cartel to combat the debt burden.

In a heated disagreement, the Chief of Naval Staff, Rear Admiral Murtala Nyako, said critics of Nigeria's defence expenditure were often ignorant of what the money was used for. He mentioned the navy flagship *NNS Aradu* which he claimed cost approximately 1 billion naira and needed about 60 million naira a year to be maintained.

Nigeria's projected foreign exchange earnings are estimated to be \$7.7 billion, out of which \$2.3 bn is allocated to defence, while \$2.1 bn goes to debt servicing [paying the interest on the debt].

(excerpted from West Africa, March 26-April 1, 1990)

Where is Nigeria Heading?

— Big Versus Small —

One of the questions a lot of African countries are asking themselves is this: is it better to spend money on large projects, like dams and large machine-run farms; or is it better to spend the money on helping the "little guy" (the small farmer or small businessperson) to develop a whole lot of small projects?

Up to this point, Nigeria has spent a lot of its money on large-scale projects. Here is an article written in February 1980, from a Nigerian newspaper, the *New Nigerian*, about one very expensive, large-scale project:

Angry Farmers Halt Work on N200M. Dam

Angry farmers have halted work at the 200 million naira Bakolori Dam near Talata Mafara in Sokoto State.

Reports reaching us from Sokoto said the farmers have blocked all entrances to the dam site with huge stones and logs of wood and formed an impregnable picket line. They numbered over 5,000 . . .

The spokesmen said about 800,000 farmers were affected and complained that both their houses and farms have been taken over the dam on the pretext that they would be fully compensated in two weeks time. "The two weeks have extended to three years and we are now fed up with the promises," they said. . . .

These farmers are angry and upset because the huge dam, built at great expense, did not make their lives better, but worse, because it forced them off their farms. Large dams often lead to problems: they flood huge areas of farmland, they often have technical problems, they cost a lot of money and lead to greater debt. Kano State in northern Nigeria had a different idea about development. It has helped small farmers dig wells and buy small pumps (see pages 75 to 76) and has built roads to help farmers get their produce to market.

Suppose you were making decisions about small-scale or large-scale development. What arguments could you see for each side?

Where is Nigeria Heading?

Working Towards National Unity

Canadians right now are having trouble with national unity. There are people who speak French and people who speak English. There are aboriginal people who were here before the Europeans, and people of European descent. Sometimes it's not easy to get along together.

Nigeria is trying to deal with many different divisions:

- **The Ethnic Split:** There are many different groups of people with different languages and customs.
- **The Religious Split:** Muslims and Christians sometimes have trouble getting along together.
- **The North-South Split:** People in southern Nigeria, whether or not they are Christian or Muslim, often feel they are very different from people in the north.

What's the answer? One of the things Nigeria is trying is their National Youth Service Corps. Young people who graduate from university must give a year of their time to going to another part of Nigeria — usually a rural area where not many people want to go — and working as teachers, doctors, agriculturalists, etcetera. This helps Nigeria to get the skilled people it needs in the rural areas. Because the graduates are sent to another part of Nigeria to work among people of a different ethnic group, the National Youth Service Corps also helps to increase understanding between the different peoples and religions of Nigeria.

It's never easy for people with different languages, religions, regions and customs to understand each other. Nigerians — like Canadians and Americans — will have to think of other ways to help all Nigerians develop understanding and tolerance.

Where is Nigeria Heading?

Directions for the Future

If you talk to a young Nigerian you'll probably find that person full of hope for the future. In 1992, if the military government keeps its promise, Nigerians will elect a new democratic government. Nigerians have great hopes for this government.

The problems which Nigeria faces are large ones. The population is growing, and there are more and more people needing food and land. People in the country need clean water, education and health services. People in the cities need houses and jobs. The Nigerian government had started to provide these things, but now finds it has to cut back because the price of oil has gone down, and it doesn't have the money to pay the debt and keep improving the lives of ordinary Nigerians.

But in spite of all of these problems, which are shared by many other countries in Africa, Nigerians are a strong and hopeful people. From before the time of Christ, the people who live in what we now call Nigeria have been survivors. In the Jos Plateau they learned to mine tin, make metal farm tools, farm the land, and create beautiful clay figures. In both the north and the south they built great empires and created famous cities. During the slave trade, their healthiest young men and women were dragged across the sea to America. During the colonial period, their land and their people were used to bring wealth to Europeans. But despite all this, Nigerians have continued to follow their traditions and work hard to make a good life for their families.

Right now Nigeria is in debt, and Nigerians are poorer than they have been for a long time. But if you got on a plane tomorrow and walked through the streets of Kano or Ile-Ife, or if you drove out to a tiny village where people were busy planting their crops, you wouldn't find Nigerians feeling sorry for themselves. You'd find people laughing, talking, greeting each other in the streets or at the market. You'd find men, women and children hoeing in the fields and singing as they hoe. You'd find students working hard at school, but never too hard to laugh at a joke or kick a soccer ball.

And you'd probably come home thinking that Nigeria has a lot of problems, but that Nigeria also has 118 million creative, energetic people working to solve those problems.

Sai wata rana (sä-i wä-tä rä-nä) — Hausa

Komesi (ko-me-sé) — Ibo

O dabo (o dä-bo) — Yoruba

Goodbye — English



— Activities —

POINTS OF VIEW



- **Repairing the Wrongs, Dumping the Debt**

"We have more than a legitimate claim for damages for the crime committed against Africa."

— Jide Osuntokun, Nigerian External Affairs Department

In December 1990 Nigeria held a conference on *reparations*. Reparations means getting paid back for wrong things that have been done to you. The people at the conference decided that African countries should have reparations for

centuries of slave labour and for the use of their lands and resources by European colonialists. Moshood Abiola, a Nigerian businessman at the conference, said the West "killed our economy." Africans point out that the reason European and American countries are so rich now is because of the wealth they got from the slave trade and from African minerals and crops. Many Africans feel that now Africa is having a terrible time, these rich nations should help the African people.

The Nigerians think the European and American countries should write off Africa's foreign debt (\$250 billion US) and should help Africa with a special aid plan.

What do you think? Re-read pages 19 to 23 (on the slave trade and colonialism), and pages 111 to 113 (on the debt). Then write an article entitled: *Reparations for Africa: Why or Why Not?*

HANDS ON



- **Where is Nigeria Heading? Making Choices**

You are a member of the Nigerian government. You have a limited budget, so you have to make choices. Divide into groups of four to six students, and decide what are the most important steps for Nigeria to take. Rank the ideas below in order of importance, from the most important to the least important. Once your group has decided on the order, write the list on a large sheet of paper and be prepared to explain your reasons to the rest of the class.

- ★ building wells and pumps in rural areas
- ★ improving housing for squatters in the big cities
- ★ spending more money on education; removing secondary school fees
- ★ building better roads and transportation systems
- ★ spending more money on the armed forces
- ★ giving more help for farmers to grow crops

- ★ providing better health services — clinics, vaccinations, village health care
- ★ building more factories
- ★ sending more Nigerian students to North American universities
- ★ helping build more factories so Nigeria can make more of its own things, and not have to buy them from other countries

LET'S DISCUSS



• Getting Together

National Unity is hard to achieve in any country. Discuss the problems Nigeria has had, since independence, trying to be a united country. Discuss the problems your country has in achieving national unity (regionalism, different ethnic backgrounds, different languages and customs, people feeling they are not being treated equally, people not understanding each other). What are some of the things that could be done to improve the situation in Nigeria? in your country?

MEDIA REPORT



• Where is Nigeria Heading? Front Page News!

It's 1992. The elections have just been held; the new government is meeting. Pretend you're a radio announcer, a TV reporter, or a newspaper writer. Prepare a script or an article on the topic: *Where is Nigeria Heading?*

LET'S FIND OUT



• Thinking Big, Thinking Small

Read page 114, which tells about the farmers forced off their land by a large dam. Then re-read pages 75 to 76, which tell about a different approach to irrigation in Kano State. Find out about a large hydro-electric project in your country. Generally there are people who support such projects, and people who are against them for many reasons. Some of the things governments have to think about

are these: environmental concerns, flooding of land, jobs created by a big project, and the expense of large projects. Write a report on one of these large-scale projects, including information on the different points of view about it.



GLOSSARY

alafin - the traditional ruler of Oyo, the southeastern Nigerian city which was once a powerful empire

appropriate technology - the use of skills, tools and machines that are adapted to the society in which they are used. Often in developing countries the most appropriate technology is not necessarily the most up-to-date. For example, it is more appropriate to use a hand-pump than an electric pump in areas where supply of electricity is a problem, and ploughing with animals is often more appropriate than ploughing with tractors in countries where gasoline and parts are scarce and expensive.

calabash - a hollow gourd, often used as a bowl to carry things

census - an official count of the people in a country, with details of age, sex, occupation, etc.

colonialism - the political takeover of one country by another, and the use of the resources of the colony to help develop the colonizing country

commodities - raw materials, such as crops, timber, or mineral ore, which are traded on the world market

compound - a cluster of houses, often surrounded by a wall, where a family or an extended family lives

corruption - dishonesty, especially in government: cheating in elections, taking bribes, etc.

coup - the take-over of a government by force

debt - Foreign debt is the owing of money to banks or governments in other countries

desertification - the process of changing farmland or grazing land to desert. This usually happens because of over-use of the soil, over-grazing, deforestation and resulting erosion.

emir - the Muslim ruler of a northern Nigerian city

exports - goods sold to other countries. They may be *crops* like cocoa or cotton, which are grown to sell outside the country, *raw materials* like timber or mineral ore, or *manufactured goods* — things made in factories.

extended family - the smaller family (mother, father and children — often called the *nuclear family*), plus grandparents, step-parents, aunts and uncles, and cousins. We all have extended families, but in Nigeria they tend to live closer together, and feel closer to each other, than they do in North America.

Fulani - The Fulani people are distributed among several West African countries. The Nigerian Fulani are composed of nomadic people who follow their herds, and "town Fulani," who have settled in towns and cities.

Hausa - Nigeria's largest tribal group, the Hausa people, live in northern Nigeria.

human rights - Freedom of expression, freedom to practice one's own religion, and freedom to receive a fair trial are considered to be the rights that all humans should have. There are also *economic* human rights — the right to food, clothing and shelter.

Ibo - One of Nigeria's largest tribal groups, the Ibo people (sometimes spelled Igbo) live in southeastern Nigeria.

imports - products which a country buys from other countries

inselberg - a smooth, massive mound of granite which stands up from the surrounding plains

Islam - the Muslim religion (see *Muslim* below)

lost wax - a method used by the early bronze casters of Benin, Ile-Ife and Iboland to create bronze figures

mangrove swamp - salt water swamp, in which the main plants are the stilt-rooted mangrove trees

manufactured goods - products which are made on a large scale, usually in factories

Muslim - a religion following the teachings of the prophet Mohammed. The followers of Mohammed are sometimes called *Mohammedans*, as well as *Moslems* or *Muslims*. The religion itself is usually called *Islam*.

oba - ruler of Benin

ooni - spiritual leader of the Yoruba people who lives in Ile-Ife

polygamous - a family structure in which there is a single husband and more than one wife

primary health care - helping people get simple medical care (aimed at preventing disease as well as treating it), especially in rural areas

purdah - the custom among strict Muslims of forbidding older girls and women to leave their home

Sallah - the celebration which comes at the end of Ramadan (see below)

Ramadan - the month-long period of fasting which is part of the Muslim year

raw materials - products which are mined or harvested, and sold "as is," rather than refined. Untreated logs, for instance, are raw materials, but boards are refined materials, and wooden furniture is a manufactured product.

regionalism - the commitment of people to their own region, rather than to the interests of the whole country

rural - in the country — not in a town or city

sahel - the very dry region of semi-desert spreading south and west from the Sahara

savanna - grassland, with scattered trees

shifting cultivation - the traditional method of farming in much of Africa and other parts of the world, sometimes called *slash and burn cultivation*. An area is used for a few years, and then left fallow (unplanted) for several years to get back its nutrients while the farmer clears new areas to grow crops.

slave-gun cycle - the trading pattern of European slave traders from the late fifteenth century to 1833, which was to trade guns for slaves, but not for anything else. This forced the Africans to capture slaves, or be captured themselves.

staple food - the basic food of an area, such as wheat in North America, and yams, cassava or millet in areas of Nigeria

terracotta - a hard, fired clay, reddish-brown in colour, used to make the ancient Nok and Ife figures

Third World - most of the countries in the southern hemisphere, which have a low average income and make most of their money by selling commodities — raw products like crops and minerals. Almost all of the Third World countries were colonies at one time, and this is one reason they are poor. The First World includes the rich countries of North America, Europe, Australia and New Zealand.

tsetse fly - a blood-sucking African fly which carries sleeping sickness, fatal to cattle and horses

urban - having to do with cities and towns — the opposite of rural, which has to do with areas in the countryside



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